Conflicts in Religious Thought

GEORGIA HARKNESS

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CONFLICTS IN RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

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CONFLICTS IN RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

BY

GEORGIA HARKNESS

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IN ELMIRA COLLEGE

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TO

MY FATHER AND MOTHER

who gave me my first lessons
in religious thought

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PREFACE

This book aims to give a simple statement of the major problems of religious thought with some suggestions for their solution. It deals with the profoundest questions and conflicts of human thinking, and in the argument here presented the author's main objective, aside from the desire to state it truly, has been to avoid stating it profoundly.

Religion and philosophy touch every phase of life. These are the fields above all others that embrace the interests of the common man. Everybody has some sort of religious concepts; everybody has some sort of philosophy. Yet all too often the religious concepts are vague and shadowy, or seeking to find concreteness in outworn theology are shot through with inconsistencies. Philosophy is much more coldly logical. It points out religion's shadows and inconsistencies—then frequently retires into a realm of abstract speculation so remote from life that the common man sees nothing in it save the tortuous wranglings of certain anemic and altogether useless highbrows.

Religion and philosophy ought both to keep close to life. Both ought to put their disputations to the task of interpreting and serving life. Both ought to give men a sense of the precariousness of dogmatism, and

ought also to give men some convictions to which they can commit themselves and live. Some exponents, at least, in both fields should speak the language of the common man.

Religion has spoken the language of ordinary speech much more often than has philosophy. It has been forced to do so, for it deals with the ordinary problems of ordinary folk. But in dealing with these problems, its tools too often have not been sharpened on the whet-stone of philosophy, and it has given answers that the thinker could not accept. The thinker, on the other hand, has generally addressed himself primarily to other thinkers, and the treasures he might have made available for the common man have remained the esoteric possession of the enlightened few.

In dealing with hundreds of college undergraduates in classroom and personal conference, the author has long felt the need of a book which would present the essential principles of the philosophy of religion in a form that could be understood by the person who has not had previous training in philosophy. There are excellent books on the problems of religious thought, but those which are scholarly are in most cases a locked door to the college freshman, or even senior. The argument is involved, the terminology bewildering, and he turns away in despair. And the plight of the undergraduate is also the plight of many a layman who would like to know, if he could, on what grounds he may believe. Never have the age-old problems of

religion had to face a more acute questioning than today, and the common man is groping for an answer.

So this, briefly, is the history of this book. I waited for someone else to write it; none came to hand that met the need of my students; and I decided to write it myself. It is to be hoped that someone soon will publish a volume fulfilling its function far more perfectly than this.

An author can ill afford to be too much concerned with what reviewers will say of his book. This book will be criticised; it ought to be. But if the criticism be offered that it is too elementary, or too "unscholarly," let it be understood that in order to say clearly the essential things, the author has been obliged to omit many things that might have made it more scholarly—and more esoteric. The historical backgrounds of ideas have in most cases been omitted. There has been no attempt to give an extended discussion of moot points that are of academic interest only. The terminology has been rigidly limited to that which appears in the vocabulary of the intelligent but philosophically uninitiated layman.

Some will find the book too theological; some not theological enough. The attempt has been made throughout to treat the problems from a philosophical rather than a theological standpoint. For a person whose major training has been in philosophy, no other procedure would be possible. Problems of Christology and Biblical interpretation have received only minor

mention, not because they are unimportant, but because they are questions of the theology of a single religion. The study has been confined to universal problems and approached from the standpoint of experience rather than authority. No claim is made that the road to religious belief herein suggested is the only road. It is simply *one* road, and the one which the writer has found most logically cogent and practically satisfying.

It would be a pleasant task, but one impossible of fulfillment, to make all the acknowledgments that should be made. There is little in this book that is original. Its convictions are the heritage of a line of thinkers stretching back at least to Plato. Of contemporary philosophers, there is one to whom I owe a debt above all others, Professor Edgar Sheffield Brightman of Boston University. It was from him that I first studied systematically the philosophy of religion, and to his inspiring teaching and guidance to a doctorate in this field, are due much of the content and not a little of the form of this book. A second debt is due to Professor William Ernest Hocking of Harvard University, under whose instruction and friendly guidance my thought was later molded. As I write I am conscious of a debt to a third great teacher with whom I am now studying, Professor Douglas Clyde Macintosh of Yale University. The errors in this book are not theirs; whatever merits it may possess are due in no small measure to their instruction.

Friends have given freely of their time in criticism and suggestion. The manuscript has been read in full and many valuable suggestions made by Professor Brightman, by Professor Robert L. Calhoun of Yale University, and by Rev. Emmett W. Gould, student pastor in Middlebury, Vermont. It has also been read in part by Professors Halford E. Luccock and D. C. Macintosh of Yale University and Professor Elmer W. K. Mould of Elmira College.

To President Frederick Lent of Elmira College, my thanks are due for the leave of absence from teaching duties which has given the leisure necessary to complete the task. To the Sterling Foundation of Yale University I am indebted for the financial assistance which has made possible a year of writing and study.

GEORGIA HARKNESS

New Haven, Connecticut,
February 8, 1929.

CONFLICTS IN RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS RELIGION?

Religion is something of a chameleon. No other term has been conceived so variously. We talk about religion glibly enough, and nearly everybody knows, or thinks he knows, what he means by it. But I am very likely not to mean by it what my neighbor means. This difference of opinion may remain a harmless and even stimulating intellectual disagreement, or it may become distressingly personal and set me to saying bad things about my neighbor. For disagreements in religion, men through the centuries have slandered and slain each other.

Religious pugnacity is fast giving way to religious indifference. Our fathers fought—sometimes acrimoniously—for their religious convictions. Today there are not so many convictions to fight over. There is a feeling that it makes very little difference what one means by religion, or whether one means anything. Being an institution hoary with age, it is to be treated with the respect due the aged or thrust aside as passé, as one's disposition dictates. Certain of its forms—marriage, burial, some measure of church-going—are to be retained as a concession to the requirements of conventional respectability. But as for religion's meaning anything in particular, this is

a free country and one may think as one pleases! Or if one prefers he may refrain from thinking at all. The resultant vacuum is then labeled religion.

Neither pugnacity nor indifference will get us far on the road to truth. The greatest need of our day is for a combination of the open-mindedness which makes for progress with the loyalty to convictions which conserves the contributions of the past. We must have a union of clear thinking with devotion to worthy and enduring values. In the field of religion there is needed, not more light and less heat, but a clearer flame. If the disintegrating forces which threaten are not to disrupt religious faith, they must be met by a frank and open-minded—yet reverent—examination of the foundations on which religion rests. And we cannot go far unless we know what we are talking about.

What is religion? One would be presumptuous indeed who would claim to give a complete and all-inclusive definition. Religion is the most widely debated and least agreed upon phenomenon of human history.

Religion itself is bound to be variable, for it reflects the variable habits of thought and action of the people who experience it. It prompts one mother to throw her baby in the Ganges; it prompts another to establish a Baby Welfare clinic. To the Old Testament chroniclers Jehovah was a God of battles; to Jesus a loving Father, a God of peace and world-wide brotherhood. To one type of current religious belief God is

the author of an inerrant book; to another the source of a progressive spiritual revelation extending through the ages. The religion of Christ is not the religion of Mohammed. If we undertake to narrow down our concept of religion to that of Christianity, and then to Protestant Christianity, and then (for example) to Presbyterian Christianity, and then to present-day Presbyterian Christianity in the United States, or even in a single community, there is still diversity enough to make us search for a common denominator.

Yet the search for the meaning of religion is not hopeless, for underneath all this diversity there are common elements. Wherever men have felt the experience we call religion, they have believed that there is a power other than themselves—a God, or gods, or "determiner of destiny" [1]—that is of basic importance in the shaping of human affairs. They have usually believed also that if they would attain values that lie beyond man's ordinary grasp, they must adopt an attitude of trust or reverence in the presence of this power. And they have believed—however inchoately—that since the values of life are in the keeping of this power, no ultimate harm can befall the trusting spirit.

Religion may be broadly described as the total attitude of life toward what is regarded as divine.[2] This

[1] This term is borrowed from J. B. Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness.*

[2] Cf. E. S. Brightman, *An Introduction to Philosophy,* p. 318. "Religion is the total attitude of man toward what he considers to be superhuman and worthy of worship, or devotion, or propitiation, or at least of reverence."

is not a definition of religion, for the meaning of "divine" is necessarily indefinite. Its content must be determined historically by an examination of what men under widely varying circumstances have considered this more-than-human power to be, and such a study falls outside the province of this book. To primitive man this determiner of destiny is *mana*—a vague, mysterious force thought to be the source of the fertility of the soil, the skill of the hunter, the potency of the totem: in short, of everything important and unexplainable. In Brahmanism it is Brahma, the great impersonal oversoul in which human personality seeks absorption and extinction. In Buddhism, often said to be an atheistic religion, the deified Buddha affords the object of worship which its founder did not purpose to give but which the soul of man refuses to be denied.[3] In the religions of Greece and Rome we find gods in the likeness of men—a faulty but splendid anthropomorphism. The Confucianist worships the deified spirits of his ancestors; the Mohammedan worships Allah. But whether this object of worship be called Allah, or Yahweh, or the Heavenly Father, men everywhere, in so far as they have had a religion, have believed in some sort of superhuman power, and have sought in some manner to bring this power into intimate touch with human needs.

[3] Whether Buddhism in its original form is to be considered a religion is a disputed question. In the author's judgment, it depends on whether the values sought in Gautama's philosophy of self-renunciation and service can be regarded as having an implicit cosmic reference.

An intellectual acceptance of the doctrine of God's existence does not, of course, make one religious. The sin of unbelief—if it be a sin—is not an intellectual rejection but a personal repudiation of what religion has to offer. There are plenty of people today, untouched by the pain (or the exhilaration) of religious doubt, who are living fundamentally irreligious lives. Philosophy can give one reasons for believing in God: philosophy cannot make one religious. Religion is a personal appropriation, an attitude of life. Religion is belief in a Controlling Cosmic Power, *plus* the willingness to mold one's life by the implications of that belief.

Nor is the essence of religion found in rituals and cults. Through ceremonials and sacrifices men have sought to propitiate the wrath of an angry deity or gain the favor of a grudging god. Through the savor of incense, through genuflections, through liturgies of every shade of crudity and dignity, through music ranging from the beating of tomtoms to the Hallelujah Chorus, men have poured out their souls in the presence of the determiner of destiny. Many of these ritualistic acts have arisen from personal vanity or desire for conformity to social custom,—like a tawdry Easter Sunday millinery display or Fifth Avenue parade. Most of them have come at bottom—however much overlaid—from an upwelling impulse of the human heart to worship God. Only the latter merit the name of religion.

Religion cannot be defined in terms of intellectual belief, nor of ceremonial. Nor can it be defined wholly in terms of worship, though the attitude of worship—the bowing of the soul before the Infinite in trust and adoration [4]—is its most characteristic attribute. Religion is a way of life—the pursuance of a course of conduct because the individual believes this course to be the will of God. One's idea of right and wrong—the specific content of one's moral code—is conditioned by the standards of the social group in which he has been reared. The impulse to *live* according to this code, or if need be to transcend it, becomes religious when consciously linked with moral obedience to the divine. All man's moral strivings are perhaps unconsciously a quest for God; man becomes religious when he purposefully seeks to work together with God (or the gods) in the furtherance of his moral task. Religion in all its higher forms is ethical.

But while religion is ethical, it by no means follows that ethics is religion. Religion is essentially a way of life—but not every way of life, not even every way of life rigorously and devotedly adhered to, is a religion. Numerous attempts have been made in recent years to define religion in purely human terms and identify its content with morality. But religion is not morality—not even "morality touched with emotion"—unless the emotion is of the specific kind which links the religious

[4] See Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy,* for a remarkable treatment of the significance of this phase of religion.

soul with cosmic forces. Positivism [5] and its Religion of Humanity—from Comte to the most recent behavioristic attempt at a "Christian atheism"—fall short of affording contact with the cosmic reality which is the heart of religion. Such efforts have given the world some excellent sociology, but sociology is not religion.

Any attempt to make the term religion cover too wide a territory is bound to destroy its meaning. To call any dominant ideal or activity—such as money-getting, or the quest of beauty, or Communism—a man's religion, is to give the term a slip-shod connotation. Unless it is to degenerate into a catch-all, a convenient label for anything we wish to honor or stigmatize, it must be used in a more specific sense.

Two functions religion at its best has always had (and even religion under a cloud has never wholly lost sight of these)—to make men better and to make men stronger. Keenness of moral vision, strength to meet the storms and battles of life—these have been the dual gifts of religion. "Under one aspect it is a road to travel; under the other it is a city to dwell in." [6] And the road has been conceived as a road to God; the city of refuge as the City of God. Religion is the outreach of man's whole being toward the divine.

"Religion is mysticism—being strengthened with

[5] The theory that we can have no knowledge of anything beyond the realm of verifiable sense experience. The term originated with Auguste Comte (1798-1857) who suggested the abandonment of theology and metaphysics for the "positive" knowledge of science, and a substitution of the worship of Humanity for that of God.

[6] Cyril Harris, *The Religion of Undergraduates,* p. 38.

power through God's Spirit in the inward man; it is ethics—the wrestling of man's ideal with man's actual; it is metaphysics—the assurance that not dirt but personality is the final interpreter of the Eternal." [7] To deny the eternal, the cosmic, the metaphysical element in religion is to vitiate both its mysticism and its ethics.

In the study which follows, we shall assume that the distinguishing feature of religion is man's belief in some sort of more-than-human determiner of destiny, and the response of his life to that belief. If it be charged that this statement is too broad to give any specific description of religion or too narrow to include all types, the author is not disposed to quarrel with the accusation. Religion itself is too broad and many-sided to be neatly pigeon-holed; yet not so all-inclusive that its breadth becomes mere flatness.

To say that religion believes the universe and man's destinies to be guided by a Controlling Cosmic Power is not to assert that such a power exists. We shall later traverse at length the considerations which bear upon the deep and unanswered question of God's existence. But some kind of cosmic foundation religion must have, or it ceases to be religion. The oldest and most persistent quest of the human spirit is the quest for God. Let us see where such a quest will lead us.

[7] Harry Emerson Fosdick in *Recent Gains in American Civilization*, p. 252.

CHAPTER II

WHY HAVE RELIGION?

The primary battle which religion must fight today is the battle to justify its own existence. Before one can find an answer to questions of God's existence and man's destiny, one must care enough to ask the questions. "If any man willeth to do the will of God he shall know of the teaching"—but what if one does not will? Such a condition confronts religion today in more serious dimensions than at any previous time in history. There is probably not less of vital religion in the world today than formerly, but there is less of conviction that religion is necessary. One can "get along" without it, can be comfortable and happy and decent without it—so why bother with it?

The following statement from a theme written in a New England college is fairly typical of the attitude of modern youth:

"On making a tour of our dormitory we discovered that it is divided into two fairly equal groups: those who adhere to the beliefs which they have been taught, either because of mental laziness or fear for the consequences of thought on the subject; and those who style themselves pantheists, atheists, mystics and the like, using the terms loosely and with no definite knowledge of their meaning. By far the majority would, I think, call themselves naturalists had

they ever heard the term. Their reasons for doubt of conventional religion are based on naturalistic grounds—that as scientific knowledge advances the need for supernatural explanation recedes, that the hypothesis of the existence of God lacks evidence for its support, that dogmatic religion is a hindrance to progress."

Modern youth is frank, and it makes no pretense of a religious interest which it does not possess. Not many are militantly hostile to religion (those who are atheists by conviction are rare—despite the boasts of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism!), but multitudes are religiously indifferent. Religion does not grip them because they see no need for it.

This is due in part to the crowding out of religion by other interests. There are more things to amuse us than ever before; more implements of speed; more forms of luxury to indulge in. The economic simplicity of Jesus' life, and Buddha's, and St. Francis' is far removed from the movies, dances, football games, radios, automobiles, and luxurious fraternity houses which make up so large a part of the life of modern youth. In America, particularly, prosperity is in a fair way to bring about our spiritual undoing.

Religion is being crowded out, not only by the counter-attractions of an over-supply of material possessions, but by the competition of pseudo-science. Between real religion and real science there can be no quarrel. But when science becomes dogmatic and claims to cover the universe, denying the reality of

anything which lies outside its province, then in the eyes of our science-worshipping age religion ceases to have a function. The fear of future torment which possessed our fathers has given way to a new hell—the fear of being thought unscientific.

And religion is perhaps its own worst enemy. For religion, masquerading under the guise of archaic creeds, and impossible literalisms, and ecclesiasticism indifferent to human needs, has brought about an inevitable and in many respects wholesome revulsion. The heart of modern youth is not hostile to *religion* (witness the splendid idealism and social passion with which it grips them—when it grips them); youth is hostile to the travesties upon religion which have so long passed muster as its reality. And too often they are unable to separate the reality from the sham; for their whole experience has been with pseudo-religion, with denominational quarrels, with prudish restraints, with haphazard Sunday School instruction that failed to instruct, with dry sermons falling on deaf ears. It is not surprising that youth has so often decided to boycott the whole business and have a good time, being as morally respectable as one finds convenient and profitable.

What then shall we say when youth challenges us to give a reason for religion? Fear of future punishment no longer affords an incentive. The authority of the church is not trusted as testimony in its own defense. Attitudes inbred in home and social environment are

effective only if these have engendered a wholesome respect for religion—and commonly the proviso is unfulfilled. "You ought" fails to carry the weight of an unconditional obligation. *"Why* ought I?" is the natural rejoinder. And it is a legitimate question.

Let us begin by considering what the values are which we prize most highly in life. Happiness, surely. And some kind of worthwhile work. And friends. And money enough to live comfortably. And health. And intelligence—at least, a moderate amount. (We should all like to be "healthy, wealthy and wise," if we could be without too great inconvenience.) Dr. Richard Cabot tells us that "what men live by" is work, play, love and worship. Bertrand Russell finds that the good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge.[1] To the Greeks we owe the time-honored trilogy of the good, the true, and the beautiful. Professor Everett in his *Moral Values* classifies the primary values of life as economic, bodily, recreational, associational, character, æsthetic, intellectual, and religious. In varying forms, these have been ranked by humanity as the most worthy ends of life.

What, then, is the relation of religion to these values? Cannot they be attained without it? A frank facing of the facts requires a more affirmative answer than some of our fathers would have admitted. All human values, save the religious values themselves, *can* be experienced without any conscious relating of the soul

[1] *What I Believe,* p. 20.

to God. One can be healthy, wealthy, and wise; comfortable, decent and happy, without religion. There are noble-spirited atheists. There are lovable, magnificent personalities who have found goodness, truth and beauty without consciously finding God.

Then is there any case left for the need of religion? No friend of religion need fear for its sudden demise. But no longer can it rest its case on assertions of eternal damnation—in this life or the next—for unbelievers.

The following pages will attempt to show that religion has a function, a function so vital that any life without it is incomplete. Religion has a double function: it adds new meaning to all the values of life, and it affords to the religious spirit an unique enrichment.

. . . .

To start at the bottom of the scale of values (or the top, if one judge by strength rather than by quality of motivation), what about the relation of religion to money-getting? Though a case can be made for the contention that "honesty is the best policy," and honesty is often religiously engendered, we shall not here defend that thesis. The possession of religious insight does not add with any certainty to the possession of this world's goods. It may even lead to voluntary poverty in the quest of an ideal. The great religious spirits—Jesus, Buddha, Socrates, St. Francis, Gandhi—have not been wealthy men. Prosperity is

no criterion of spiritual favor. "The tents of robbers prosper." In spite of attempts to portray the founder of Christianity as leader of the Galilean Rotarians, Jesus remains the impecunious carpenter of a country village.

But is there, then, perpetual warfare between the treasures of earth and the treasures of heaven? Only when "the care of the world and the deceitfulness of riches" crowds out the higher values. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness"—then the whole process of money-getting and money-spending takes on new light, and one finds that economic goods are the servant of the spirit, not its master.

Though lack of space forbids any detailed analysis of the present economic situation, the principal sources of human misery may fairly be said to lie in the over-possession, the under-possession, and the unwise use of economic goods. Until our social order is spiritualized and Christianized, this condition will continue to thwart happiness and crush personality. Not abundance of possessions, but quality of life in the midst of these possessions (or in the dearth of them) is the gift of religion.

. . . .

And what about health? Will religion reduce our doctors' bills? Yes. Not in any magical fashion: not through any touching of the bones of saints nor calling upon the Almighty to enact miracles; not through any claiming of a special dispensation of Providence to

banish our ills while our neighbors writhe in pain. But in the orderly processes which function in our psycho-physical organism—in the science of psychotherapy, we find evidence that religion is an aid to bodily health. Not until the present generation have men sensed the tremendous importance of preserving a sane, well-balanced attitude toward life if one would preserve his physical well-being. Jesus sensed it; through this channel he cast out demons. Modern psychology would say that he removed complexes, that he released tensions. In any case he took dwarfed, thwarted, diseased personalities and made them whole through the power of a new spirit. And there are today multitudes of demon-possessed, waiting to be healed through contact with the strength and radiance of his personality.

Physicians tell us that fully three-fourths of the patients who present themselves at the doctor's door have no organic ailment. "Nervous diseases" of all varieties—neurasthenia, hysteria, anxiety neuroses, phobias, obsessions—with their accompanying train of aches and pains which crop out everywhere in the body and paralyze the functioning of vital organs, these are responsible for by far the larger part of humanity's ill-health. Across many of his record cards one physician has written the significant verdict, "*Does not know how to live.*" "The real tragedy of our time is a plague of decomposing personality; and that in turn springs from

our failure to 'know how to live.' We are missing the point of life; and our lives are falling to pieces." [2]

The application is simple. Not through any faith-healing cult, but through a sane, steadfast religious faith do we find release from obsessions and fears, and find guidance for an aimless, drifting life. The "plague of decomposing personality" can be met only by the sanitation of a mental housecleaning, and through the centuries it has been the function of religion to create a clean heart and renew a right spirit within.

. . . .

We hear a great deal more in these days than formerly about the need of a proper vocational adjustment. A person's mental poise is determined in no small measure by the nature of his work and the conditions under which he labors, for work and play together fill up most of the hours of our existence. Work is effort directed toward the accomplishment of an end. And what has this to do with religion?

Indirectly, a great deal. One cannot work successfully unless he enjoys his work, and finds in it something worth doing. It is one of the major tragedies of our times that the mechanization of industry has so often mechanized men. As vision without work makes a dreamer, so work without vision makes a drudge. If work is ever to be more than drudgery, some ideal

[2] Richard Roberts, "Beyond the Four Walls," *The World Tomorrow*, Oct., 1927.

element must be injected in it. Religion is not the only source of ideals, but it is one of the most important sources. If one can view his labor (whether in specifically religious fields or not), as a task committed to him by God, he is likely to find in it something worth doing, and he is not likely to groan about the dullness of it. While it may not be literally true that "honest toil is praise and prayer," there is an intimate connection.

. . . .

And what of religion and play? Play means the enjoyment of an activity for its own sake, the joyous, spontaneous release of the spirit from care. Religion sets before men serious tasks to be performed. Hence, religion and play have been thought incompatible, and religion has done itself no little harm in its efforts to stifle innocent play. But religion is related to the whole of life and cannot be indifferent to any vital human interest. Religion at its best has always urged men to rejoice, to be happy, to sing and shout their joy in sheer exaltation of spirit.

"Give not over thy soul to sorrow;
And afflict not thyself in thine own counsel.
Gladness of heart is the life of a man;
And the joyfulness of a man is length of days." [3]

It is not by accident that modern religious education in its task of imparting moral and religious ideals has

[3] Ecclesiasticus, 30: 21, 22.

turned to the play life of children and youth as one of its most important media. It is to misjudge the church to claim that its gymnasiums and swimming pools are mere bait to catch members. They are (or ought to be) the setting for life situations in which right attitudes can be engendered. One may learn to serve God on the athletic field, for the "religious" attitude toward life is that of wholesome, honest fun as well as of serious duty. To "take such diversions as can be used in the name of the Lord" may sound old-fashioned, but it is by no means an outworn bit of verbiage.

. . . .

What about religion and friendships? Religion and our social contacts? That one can have friends without religion is obvious. We are not trying to prove that religion is the *sine qua non* of all values; our point rather is that all values *plus* religion take on a meaning and a richness which they would not have without it. As philosophy "bakes no bread," but makes all the bread taste better, so religion does not create the friendship of the world, but it makes all friendships richer and more meaningful.

What makes a friend anyway? Congeniality and kinship of interests, affection, mutual sympathy and trust. Too much obtrusiveness in religion, too blundering an attempt to "save souls" by prying into another's private affairs, too much pious talk, may destroy friendship instead of upbuilding it. (And de-

stroy religion too! Witness the effect of well-meaning but often tactless attempts to "evangelize" a new-fashioned generation in an old-fashioned way.) But this is not the kind of friendship we find in the life of Jesus, or any other great religious spirit.

It is a truism—too often overlooked in practice—that to have friends one must be a friend. One can be popular on the basis of rather superficial qualities. One cannot be *beloved* unless one is willing to love. One must be willing to sympathize and to serve, and expect no reward, if one would have many friends and keep them. And religion supplies an incentive which makes for rich friendships. Religion at its best has always put service and self-giving love at the apex of the moral virtues. The truly religious soul (not the pseudo-religious) reveals the kind of love which bids a man "lay down his life," and take it up again in mutual helpfulness and good will. Looking over humanity in the large, experience bears witness to the fact that the most genuinely religious people are also the most socially-minded citizens and the most dependable friends.

. . . .

The linkage of man's æsthetic nature with his attitude toward the cosmos—in short, with his religious nature, is historically one of the oldest of human attributes. It goes back to the rude chants, the rhythmic rites, the tomb-adornment of primitive society. It became fully articulate in beauty-loving Greece, pro-

vided the inspiration for the great cathedrals of the Middle Ages, and left a contribution for all time in the paintings and sculpture of the Renaissance. With varying emphases, sometimes with temporary and tragic sunderings, religion and art have walked hand in hand. It is not by accident that we worship best in a beautiful church or cathedral, or that a pealing symphony of sound lifts us out of ourselves and into the presence of the Infinite.

Professor Hocking tells us that religion is the mother of all the arts, for out of the religious impulse have sprung the various types of culture which we designate generically as the arts.[4] Likewise, in a more specific sense religion is the mother of most of the works of beauty which the world's great creative geniuses have produced. One cannot visit the cathedrals and art-galleries of Europe without being deeply impressed—if he has the understanding to be impressed at all—with the religious grandeur, the keen-seeing mystical vision, the sense of creating "under the aspect of eternity" which dominated Michael Angelo, and Raphael, and da Vinci, and others of their kind.

But this seems a bit remote. What about the rest of us, plain, prosaic folk, with no artistic creativity? Does religion add anything to our beauty-giving, or our beauty-getting? Here too religion makes its con-

[4] W. E. Hocking, *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, Ch. II.

tribution. The religious soul sees something in the beauty of the sunset that is hidden from the common eye. We all may lift up our eyes unto the hills; it is only the religious spirit that sees in their majesty the added promise of strength from the Almighty. There is beauty in the face of any dirty little urchin, if one sees there the image of God. There is beauty even in squalor and ugliness, if one sees there human tenderness and sacrificial love. But one must open his eyes to see.

> "Earth's crammed with heaven,
> And every common bush afire with God:
> But only he who sees, takes off his shoes,
> The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries."

. . . .

The kinship of the religious impulse to the æsthetic can scarcely be denied; in fact, some would identify them.[5] But what of religion and the quest for truth? When one is trying to think straight, does not religion befuddle the issue, and inject a bewildering array of dogmas, superstitions, prejudices? Held before men's eyes, is it a blindfold or an aid to clearer vision?

It depends on the kind of religion—and the kind of truth. The kind of religious faith which sets itself up in opposition to reason—the kind which reiterates with

[5] Cf. Avis D. Carlson, "Beauty and Religion," *Harper's*, March, 1928. Also Reinhold Niebuhr, "Beauty as a Substitute for Righteousness," *The Christian Century*, Sept. 29, 1927.

stubborn insistence, "I will believe," though the evidence be all on the other side—this kind of faith is truth-destroying. And further, it is self-destroying. Man's mind will not permanently be content to harbor contradictions. Where faith rests not in reasoned convictions but in blind credulity, reason is bound to rise up sooner or later and cast its offending rival out of doors.

But faith need not be an offending rival. It can be a cooperating ally. It ought to be. If religion is to survive it must be. More will be said later upon this head; in fact, the major thesis of this book is that faith and reason when rightly envisaged are harmonious, not conflicting.

To turn to the positive side of the issue, what can religion do to aid men in their search for truth? Its contribution is not trivial; for it affords a motive, a method, and a metaphysics.

Some men seek new knowledge because of a disinterested love of truth. Most men seek it, if at all, because of what they hope to be able to do with it. And the desire to serve God and one's fellow-man has been the incentive, in no small measure, for the advancement of learning. It is not by accident that the church traditionally has been the custodian of education. During the Middle Ages when the lamp of civilization would have gone out had not the Church preserved the learning of the past, it did so because of

a deep conviction, religiously engendered, that God desired wisdom in his chosen servants. It is not by accident that the first colleges to be established in this country were almost without exception church colleges. Nor is it accidental that in the opening up of other countries to the better elements of western civilization and the spread of education in the face of obstacles, the most valiant service has been rendered by Christian missionaries. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Not all, but many, of the exponents of the Christian faith have taken seriously the injunction to love the Lord with all one's *mind*, and have staked their lives on the venture. Despite all that may be justly charged against the church for its blindness and stupidity, the fact remains that it has labored through the centuries for the increase of knowledge. Without it, the intellectual darkness of the world would be infinitely greater than it is today.

But how does religion present a method? "Scientific method" we know; in fact, the term has become almost a shibboleth. But little is said of "religious method." Yet, basically, in spite of divergences, the two are one. The method of scientific discovery is essentially the method of the intuitive vision—imaginative insight tested out in experience to see if it works. And this is the method of religion. Science calls it "working hypothesis"; religion calls it the venture of faith.[6] Both use the method of "try it and see." Religion had

[6] Chapter III develops this idea further.

this method and used it for centuries before science adopted it and labeled it the experimental method.[7]

Religion, we said, supplies men not only with a motive and a method but with a metaphysics. Its world-view is not always impregnable; if it were, we could stop writing books on theology. But it supplies an answer—usually an optimistic, bracing, vitality-giving answer—to certain fundamental and perennial questions. Whence? Why? Whither? These questions will not be downed. The human mind insists, moreover, on having an answer that man can live by. Religion finds an answer to these questions in God, and man's moral task, and immortality. Much of our popular religious thinking is crude metaphysics, perhaps metaphysics of the nursery or the Sunday School rather than of the philosopher's study. But even so, it is better for practical living than no metaphysics. And with some minor details sloughed off, the basic religious convictions of plain Christian folk will stand the test of the most searching metaphysical inquiry.

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[7] No claim is made that modern scientific method is a direct product of religious faith, though there is an historical connection. Professor Whitehead in discussing the origins of modern science points out that the scientific spirit with its confidence in the law of cause and effect is an outgrowth of religion's faith in a rational God. "It must come from the medieval insistence on the rationality of God, conceived as with the personal energy of Jehovah and with the rationality of a Greek philosopher. . . . The faith in the possibility of science, generated antecedently to the development of modern scientific theory, is an unconscious derivative from medieval theology." *Science and the Modern World,* pp. 18, 19.

We come now to the type of value with which religion most closely interpenetrates, the third member in the trilogy of Beauty, Truth, and Goodness. Religion in all its higher forms is ethical; in fact, as we saw in our first chapter, some would even make religion synonymous with a moral code.

The nature of morality is under fire today, but the legitimacy of its existence is challenged by no sane individual. However much people may differ as to *what* is moral, most people grant that morality is good. Everybody, however clamorous to indulge his own desire, would rather live among good folks than among bad ones. If religion is conducive to morality, it has at least an instrumental value which makes it worth preserving.

The American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, the newspapers, the scandal-mongers, the skeptics, and many others less easily classified, have a great deal to say about the bad morals of religious people. The church deacon runs off with the collection; the minister elopes with the soloist, and there is a hue and cry! Indirectly this is a compliment to religion, for it betokens an expectation of "respectability" engendered by an overwhelming predominance of respectable conduct in persons of such connections. Religion has little to fear from such charges. Any fair-minded person grants that such instances are isolated cases. Viewed in the large, the serious moral aberrations among religious leaders are probably fewer

than in any other group. Conversely, the positive effort for the enhancement of moral living is greater. Some "professing Christians" are misguided. Some are lazy; many are tactless. But most of them try to live good lives, as they envisage goodness. And that is something, though it does not make spectacular news.

Morality, if religion dies, will lose its strongest ally. Religion, to be sure, has too often concerned itself with trivial matters; it has wrangled over dogma when it should have been teaching men to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God. It has sought to save men's souls for the next world while reeking iniquities of the present order have gone unchallenged. But after these charges, and others, have been presented and admitted, the fact remains that religion has done more than any other power in life to make men good. And it is not through fears of future torment, but through the universal heart-cry of the Psalmist, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me," that religion lifts men from their sins. If we cease to believe in a God unto whom men may cry, we must find a moral dynamic of equivalent power, and it will be no easy task to find it.

We have granted that there are noble-minded atheists whose purity of life is unimpugned. But it is a matter of considerable significance that in most cases they were brought up in religious homes, or at least in communities undergirded with religious beliefs and

standards. It would be an interesting experiment to determine the effect of religion upon moral living if a generation were to be reared in a community from which all religious influences were consistently excluded, and the gospel of atheism consistently advocated.[8] Such an experiment has never yet been tried, though Soviet Russia is perhaps the nearest approach. The outcome of such an undertaking can only be conjectured, but it is doubtful whether many atheists who have a high regard for moral probity and for the welfare of their children would care to have their own children thus experimented upon. Even if religion be only the handmaid of ethics, the belief in God is not lightly to be cast aside.

. . . .

This brief survey has tried to show that religion adds something worth while to each of the major values of life: to economic self-mastery, to physical and mental health, to work and play, to friendship, to the quest for beauty, truth, and goodness. And what of the synthetic whole? What are we here for anyway?

Some say the chief end of life is happiness; some say it is enrichment of personality. Some say it cannot be defined in any single term. On the higher levels, the quest for happiness and for self-enrichment tend to

[8] Sigmund Freud in *The Future of an Illusion,* Ch. IX, pleads vigorously for such an experiment.

converge; and this is not the place to debate ethical theory. Whichever view we adopt, religion has its place.

Every normal human being wants to be happy; in fact, happiness may safely be said to be the one thing in the world which everybody wants. Even the most cynical pessimist wants to enjoy his misery! And does religion give one happiness? Not always happiness of the superficial sort. It calls upon men to deny themselves; to take up crosses; to bear burdens. He that seeketh his life shall lose it—and then he will probably complain that the world has a grudge against him. The religion of Jesus offers no guarantee of hedonistic self-gratification. But if happiness be interpreted as the enjoyment of the richer satisfactions of life, as contentment, serenity of spirit, joyous self-mastery, as power to rise above the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune"—then religion is *par excellence* the source of human happiness. The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace. Looking over humanity in the large, experience bears witness to the fact that the most sanely spiritual people are also the happiest people.

The bearing of religion on the other great synthetic goal of life, the enrichment of personality, is both so obvious and so profound that it can scarcely be touched in a concluding paragraph. One cannot realize his best self unless he strive, to the utmost of his power, to make his life harmonious, rounded, complete. One

who closes the door to religion, whether through indifference or deliberate desire, does more than to shut himself off from the presence of God. He closes the door upon the higher reaches of his own soul. He chooses to live a partial, fragmentary life. He fails to "see life steadily and see it whole," and he commits the unpardonable sin against his own personality when he refuses to be a fully rounded person. Through the centuries, the most truly religious people have been the choicest human spirits. Breadth of vision and depth of soul—these are the gifts religion offers to him who is willing to pay the price.

CHAPTER III

SHALL WE WALK BY FAITH?

The legitimacy of any kind of faith is under fire these days, and particularly of religious faith. The advance of scientific method has led many to the conviction that nothing can be known, and therefore that nothing ought to be believed, save what can be definitely verified and proved. This is obviously one of the primary reasons for the giving up of belief in God. Deferring for the present the question of God's existence, we must ask whether faith has a rightful place in the building of our structure of beliefs. First, let us see how the matter stands historically with regard to religious faith.

1. *Roads of faith.*

There are two main roads which religious faith may travel. One is the way of an infallible external authority; the other the way of inner experience and investigation. The first is precise and definite, and suits the temper of him who wants a conducted journey. The second has alluring by-roads and offers the thrill of adventure and the joy of new discovery. One leads along a highway trod through many centuries and is traveled often by primitive conveyance; the other

pushes out into new territory and uses every available modern resource for charting areas hitherto unexplored. Sometimes the roads converge, but they proceed from different angles.

The Catholic faith follows the former of these routes. It rests its religious beliefs on the authority of the Holy and Apostolic Church, affirms the infallibility of its past pronouncements, and tries to preserve inviolate the truth delivered to the fathers. Its official doctrine is that which was formulated by St. Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century. The Church interprets the Scriptures for its adherents and prescribes what they shall believe. Deviations from the established path are not encouraged, and an incipient attempt at "modernism" in the Catholic Church was effectively crushed by the encyclical of Pope Pius X in 1907. The result is a type of thought which exerts a powerful conservative influence tending to maintain the *status quo,* but which leaves little opportunity for progress toward a more rational faith.

Protestantism owes its origin to a "protest" against the authority of the church, and an insistence upon the right of the individual to think his own thoughts, read his own Bible, and find his own way to God without the mediation of priest or mass. But Protestantism has by no means been free from the power of external authority. An infallible Book took the place of an infallible Church, and early in its history the authority-defying individualism of its founders gave

way to a docile yet intolerant acceptance of a new set of dogmas. Present-day fundamentalism, though externally at the opposite pole from Catholicism, is one with Catholicism in its reliance upon authority, dogma and creed. We have here, as so often in history, an example of the meeting of extremes.

Liberal Protestantism has been truer to its inherent genius. It has maintained that truth must be the final touch-stone of all belief, and that every avenue of mind and conscience must be followed in the quest for truth. It has found its authority, not in Church or Book, but in human experience. It has found in Church and Book great reservoirs of truth, but has maintained that Church and Book must themselves be scrutinized with the keenest intellectual and spiritual instruments available. It has tried to put a religion of the spirit in place of the religion of authority. It has attempted to conserve the contributions of the past and at the same time to go forward.

The temper of our times clearly reflects these dominant influences. While social changes have made inroads even upon Catholicism, there is no marked diminution of its power. It probably gains each year as many communicants as it loses, and the Anglo-Catholic movement is an evidence of a desire on the part of many to return to a safe haven of authority.[1] Funda-

[1] This of course is only one of the reasons for the Anglo-Catholic movement. Many are attracted by the value of the Catholic ritual for religious experience, and others by the desire to coöperate in a movement toward church union.

mentalism is waning, but exerts much influence in America in all save the more distinctly intellectual centers. Representing the conservative element within Protestantism it dominates the majority of Protestant churches; and the church is still rare where a pastor trained in a liberal seminary can say frankly all that he believes, or does not believe, without fear of alienating the "pillars" and upsetting his church.

Religious liberalism is growing in power and is firmly entrenched—particularly in urban centers. To people of intellectual training and Protestant background, it is usually the only type of religious thought that has any appeal. But it still lacks solid ground. The wide-spread religious indifference of the day is due at least in part to the fact that we are crossing a stream: fundamentalism has lost its hold on thousands and modernism has not yet gained it.

There are complex reasons for modernism's failure to have the hold on religious loyalties that fundamentalism used to have. Some of these are found in the general social and economic turmoil of the times, and a remarkable material expansion with which our moral and religious ideas have not yet caught up. Others more pertinent to our study lie in the fact that the natural conservatism of the human mind makes many afraid to venture along new paths, even though convinced that the old are wrong. Liberal leaders, even without conscious timidity, are constantly aware that their message is under fire and are under temptation

to compromise in the interests of diplomacy. And with the old foundations of external authority shaken, there are many—both of leaders and laity—who have not yet been able to find solid footing in an authority that is from within.

So we find ourselves in somewhat of a plight. External authority lends stability, and by it one may be comfortably guided—till he looks around and begins to suspect the guide. But dogmatic authority does not lead forward. It lays the dead hand of the past upon its pronouncements and obstructs progress. The only "way out" that one may travel with assurance of going forward is the way of inner religious experience and a frank facing of the truth wherever the way may lead.

There must be a way out. We cannot go back; to stand still is to be engulfed in the stream. We must go forward, and the way out can be found only in a more solid intellectual basis for religious faith. We do not need a new "Protestant scholasticism"; we do need a religious philosophy which common folks and college professors alike can grasp and live by. If religion is to survive, we must be able to walk by faith without walking in the dark.

2. *What is faith?*

We have spoken of faith thus far without attempting to define it. But before we go on to ask whether faith is intellectually legitimate, we must know what we are talking about.

Faith is a very broad and ill-defined term, and the ambiguity of its meaning has given rise to not a little of the disagreement as to its legitimacy. One of its most common meanings in ordinary speech is belief without evidence. In this sense it is equivalent to sheer credulity. If a gypsy tells my fortune and I choose to take on faith what she says, I set aside my ordinary intellectual processes and substitute a credulous confidence in occult powers. If I take for granted what a book says, or a person says, when there are reasonable grounds for doubt, I am too credulous and my faith is too naïve. Faith of this sort not only passes as a substitute for knowledge; it often sets itself up in opposition to knowledge, as when one trusts in old wives' tales about the cause and cure of illness instead of consulting a physician. The faith of religion has frequently been identified with this uncritical credulity, and this identification has to a large measure been responsible for bringing upon religion the charge of superstition.

But faith even of this sort has in it an element of trust, and credulity passes over into legitimate trust in the measure that the grounds on which it rests find connection with the facts of actual experience. I distrust the quack who merely wants to sell me his nostrums; I have faith in my family physician who has brought me through various illnesses with never a faulty diagnosis. Faith of this second sort is no longer credulity; it is a moral confidence based either on my

own experience or on the experience of others whose word I know to be trustworthy. This faith of moral confidence permeates all of life. Without it I could not believe a word that was said to me; I could not venture forth among other human beings lest someone knife me in the back. Fortunately, every normal person is endowed with a large measure of such trust. It is only the paranoiac who believes the hand of every man to be against him. This moral confidence is a healthy trust that the universe is friendly; and in this spontaneous yet disciplined trust of humanity there is an element close akin to the moral confidence of religion's faith in a friendly deity.

This brings us to a third kind of faith—the kind which the religious person usually means when he speaks of being saved by faith in Christ. He certainly means not merely an intellectual acceptance of the fact that Christ once lived, nor does he mean solely a moral commitment to the Christian way of life, though both these elements are present. He means rather that a certain revivifying inner change has taken place within his life. Struggling to describe an indescribable experience he says, "It is no longer I that live but Christ liveth in me," and he goes forth a "believer" in a sense far more meaningful to him than any intellectual concept. This kind of faith, whether manifested in conversion or worship or a daily confident trust in the indwelling presence of God, is the faith of religious experience. It has an intellectual background but its

dominant note is one of spiritual communion and personal trust. We shall return later to say more about it.

A fourth kind of faith is predominantly a matter of intellectual acceptance of beliefs, but it is an intellectual assent of a very different sort from the credulity we first described. It is a rationally grounded conviction of the truth of certain beliefs not wholly proved. It presupposes a willingness to survey all the evidence available, and then to make up one's mind on the side of the preponderance of evidence. It means essentially the forming of hypotheses and the testing of these hypotheses in experience. It frankly grants that there are many things of which we cannot be certain; yet holds that the only beliefs we have a right to adopt are those for which reasons can be given. It holds, furthermore, that we have a right to believe, even without final proof, when the burden of evidence points in one direction and proof is unattainable.

It is in the last sense that we shall now use the term —a rationally grounded conviction of the truth of beliefs not wholly proved. Faith may mean much more than this; it must not mean less. We shall rule out the first type mentioned as unworthy of a place in any field. The credulity which sets itself up in opposition to reason and to knowledge has no right to pass as faith. But when a rationally grounded faith becomes *religious* faith, it adds to its intellectual content the moral implications of the second form and the spiritual implications of the third. In the moral and spirit-

ual experience of humanity it finds incentives which make it warm and dynamic for actual living, and here also it finds evidences which help to shape and validate its intellectual convictions.[2] To "believe in God" on the grounds of a rational religious faith is not merely to find intellectual reasons for believing that God exists; it is also to feel God's sustaining power and to live as if God were real.

3. *Is religious faith legitimate?*

It is a mistake to be too dogmatic. And this means that it is a mistake to be too dogmatic either in our beliefs or disbeliefs. Theologians used to believe that the existence of God could be demonstrated by hard and fast logical proofs, but we have grown more cautious. Only a bombastic dogmatism would now contend that the matter is settled. A measure of "common sense Christian agnosticism" should temper our assertions. There is no field which human reason has not the right to enter—and reason will carry us a long way toward understanding the grounds on which religion rests—but in the end our belief must rest, not on logical demonstration, but on rational faith.

Yet this admission need not plunge us in hopeless agnosticism. We need not, like Herbert Spencer, banish God from our terminology to substitute "the Unknowable." Agnosticism has an unhappy fashion of getting itself mixed up with atheism, and tends to

[2] Cf. Ch. VI, Secs. 4-6.

shade into the latter by degrees till the distinction disappears. The non-existence of God is just as unprovable as his existence. To reject without reasons is as illogical as to accept without reasons. If we are afraid of "rationalizing" our desires, it is well to remember that it is equally bad to rationalize our antipathies. The denial of the existence of God is fundamentally an act of faith—faith not in unseen realities but in the non-reality of the unseen.

If we are going to banish religious faith, let us do so with our eyes open. The growth of scientific knowledge has brought about a justifiable protest against any kind of faith which clashes with the evidence afforded by reason and experience. Though religion has suffered outwardly from this protest, it has really been immensely helped. Where faith means blind credulity, "believing what you know ain't so," such faith had better be banished, and banished quickly. Fortunately for religion, it does not have to rest its case on this kind of faith. Where faith means, not a credulous and uncritical acceptance of the irrational, but a rational belief based on hypotheses not wholly proved, it has nothing to fear. Where faith means a sublime venture of the enlightened imagination beyond the realms of the obvious, such faith is unshaken by the advance of the scientific spirit. In fact, such a vision of unseen realities is indispensable to every field of knowledge, and science too must walk by faith.

We do not of course mean to imply that science pre-

supposes religious faith, or that the kind of faith science employs is exactly like that of religion. The tendency in science is to reduce faith to a minimum; and its modern approach is to make no metaphysical pronouncement about the real nature of the world it examines, granting frankly that the data with which it deals are data about appearances in experience only, not about ultimates. Yet science in all its experimental verifications must rest back upon the basic unproved postulate of the orderliness of the world. Scientific knowledge consists, for the most part, not of the direct evidence of our senses but of inferences drawn from what experience offers. In formulating hypotheses for the discovery of new truth, science must make bold ventures of the enlightened imagination. Applied science must proceed on a rational faith that its program will work. In short, science must start from the obvious and transcend the obvious. Herein lies a faith that is akin to that of religion.

"Seeing is believing" has become the watch-word of a scientific age. Yet "seeing is believing" is the slogan of unfaith, and rigidly adhered to would kill science as quickly as religion. It would even kill our common sense—but fortunately common sense refuses to accept it. We have only to watch the sun rise (or so it seems) in the east, or watch the railroad tracks converge (or so it seems) in the distance, or watch the stick become bent (or so it seems) in the pool—to

know we cannot believe all we see. And science disproves the adage in much the same fashion—by correcting our primary impressions, transcending the obvious, and substituting inferences for casual observations.

Mathematics is the most provable branch of knowledge there is. Here if anywhere we ought to be able to dispense with faith. With irrational faith we can dispense, but not with the acceptance of the unproved. Euclidean geometry starts with nine unproved axioms —postulates not demonstrated but assumed as necessary starting-points. Riemann has challenged the foundations of Euclidean geometry and Einstein has built upon his revision. Thus we get a more basic set of postulates, but postulates are with us still. A story is told of a precocious youth who, being asked if he could prove a certain proposition, replied, "No, but I can render it highly probable." Whether or not the story be true, the answer is.

The realm in which we walk by faith includes far more than we commonly realize. Philosophy suggests that perhaps my knowledge of you, as of God, is an act of faith. This sounds erratic—but it does not mean that the world of outer objects and other people is all a vast illusion. It means simply that when I make the assumption, as everybody in his right mind must, that there is an outer world with other people in it, I bridge the gap from *myself* to *other-than-myself* by an act of faith—faith in the trustworthiness of my

mental powers and faith in the reality of a world we can all experience. It was doubtless this which Tennyson had in mind when he wrote,

> "Nay, my son;
> Thou canst not prove that I who speak with thee
> Am not thyself in converse with thyself;
> For nothing worthy proving can be proven,
> Nor yet disproven; wherefore thou be wise,
> Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt."

The requirements of every-day living attest staunchly the fact that we could not get along without the faith of moral confidence, and this in turn rests back on the faith of rationally grounded trust. Faith that our friends will prove trustworthy, faith that the food we eat for dinner will not poison us, faith that a dollar bill is worth a dollar, faith that the bank which has our money will return it when we want it, faith that the postal system will carry the letter we mail to its destination, faith that the train for New York will carry us to New York and not Chicago—such faith from morning till night is an integral part of our very existence. We could not *live,* much less live with happiness and success, without the faith that humanity and the universe are going to give us a square deal if we trust them wisely.

Several conclusions emerge. First, that faith is by no means confined to religion. In a deep sense, "probability is the guide of life." Without faith in the reasonableness of the universe we could make no progress

toward truth. Without faith in our fellow-man and faith in the future, society would cease to function.

Second, that the presence of an element of faith as the basis of knowledge does not invalidate knowledge. Science, mathematics and philosophy are no less valid or valuable for their unproved postulates. Our knowledge of the chances we must take in every-day living is no less valuable for the recognition that these are chances rather than certainties.

Third, that in the fields we have looked into, faith is not divorced from experience and reason, but emerges from experience and correlates with reason. Religion must follow the same path. The belief in God, though it must remain an act of faith, an unproved postulate, a bold venture of the enlightened imagination, is a postulate to which we are led by a rational examination of the material which experience furnishes. The method by which religion seeks to justify its claim is not far different from that pursued in other well-established fields.[3]

. . . .

Religion shares with other fields of thought the necessity for faith. Yet its faith is not quite of the same kind. Its grasp of reality is more nearly akin to the

[3] The most suggestive recent development along this line is the thought of Professor Henry Nelson Wieman, who endeavors to harmonize the methods of religion and science by placing God entirely within the realm of human and physical nature. He defines God as "that progressive integrating process in the universe upon which we must depend for the greatest goods." This view is ably defended in his *Religious Experience and Scientific Method,* 1926; *The Wrestle of Religion with Truth,* 1927; and *Methods*

artist's vision that sees glimpses of eternal truth and beauty hid from the common eye.

Religious faith is fraught with value and meaning, and its difference from other faiths lies in the very difference it makes to human living. The faith of science gives working hypotheses by which to learn new facts; the faith of religion gives a transcendent grasp of a power by which to achieve new heights of self-mastery and peace. The faith of mathematics is an intellectual confidence in an abstract logical system; the faith of theistic religion is a personal confidence in a loving Personality. The faith of philosophy combines the search for facts with the search for meanings; only in religion do we find these values applied to human life and made warm, dynamic and effectual through the grip of personal fellowship with the divine. The faith of our every-day confidence in other human beings and knowable natural forces is essential and sublime; the mystic finds it commonplace in comparison with the vision of the Eternal Being who holds in his keeping all human persons and all nature.

Religion is rational. Its intellectual substructure ought to be justified by reason, and it can be. But religion in its higher reaches has always a more than rational element, and it is this which gives it its perennial power over the spirit of man. The mystic's vision can no more be fully expressed in terms of reason than

of Private Religious Living, 1928. This greatly reduces the demands made upon religious faith, but it also, in the present writer's judgment, reduces too far the concept of God.

can a mother's love or poet's rapture. To carve it up in intellectual analysis and leave it dismembered is to miss its meaning. We must walk by faith, if we walk at all. And hope and love must be conjoined with faith, if we would see.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT IS TRUTH?

"What is truth?" asked Pilate some twenty centuries ago, and thousands since that day have echoed his question. No more fundamental question can be asked, for the criterion by which one accepts certain beliefs as true and rejects others as false will largely determine the content of his beliefs and his attitude toward life.

The reader is perhaps impatient to get on to the question as to whether the belief in God is a true belief. If so, he may pass over this chapter. It is inserted here because the author's experience with questioning students seems to make it necessary. Seldom can one discuss the problems of life and death, religion and destiny with a group of thoughtful seekers after truth without being interrupted almost at the outset with the question, "What is truth?" The reality of truth, like almost everything else, is being challenged in these days. "Is there any truth?" "How can you tell what to believe?" "How do you know you've got the truth when you've got it?"—this is Pilate's question in modern dress.

Two conflicting attitudes toward truth are contending for the mastery in present-day thinking, either one of which must prove fatal to the progress of truth.

One is scepticism; the other dogmatism. The former goes back to the days of the Sophists, in the fifth century before Christ, when Protagoras and his comrades proclaimed that since no universal standard of truth was procurable each individual should set his own standards. "Man is the measure of all things," i.e., each man is the measure of truth for himself, became the slogan of Sophistic scepticism. Goodness likewise being, as they held, a matter merely of individual opinion, the obvious inference was that each might set his own standards of conduct also.

The earlier and greater Sophists labored for freedom of thought and action: in the later stages the liberty thus won degenerated into license. We seem now to be following a similar course. A wholesome recognition of the limitations of human knowledge and the right of each man to form his own opinions easily passes over into the assumption that one opinion is as good as any other. Transferred to ethics, this means a free-and-easy attitude toward moral problems and a clamor for "personal liberty" to do whatever one pleases. Such a spirit makes for chaos both in thought and morals, and much of our present turmoil can be traced to the assumption that there is nothing solid or dependable to stand on.

"Some things in certain lights are seen,
And some the other way;
But as to what they chance to mean,
I wouldn't care to say.

If others take another view
Quite different from such,
It's one that they're entitled to,
And doesn't matter much.

"You take it any way you like
And study it, and yet
You probably will never strike
The answer that I get.
For which is which and what is what,
And wherefore they are so,
Is something else again, and not
For you and me to know.

"So when I think of this and that,
Of where and when and why,
You don't know what I'm driving at—
And neither, sir, do I." [1]

Against this slippery attitude of go-as-you-please, the dogmatist raises his voice in alarm and demands that the truth delivered once and for all to God's elect shall stand unshaken and unchanged. The protest is made with sincerity and vigor; yet much of it is turning back the clock of progress and destroying the very cause it seeks to further. This attitude is shared in large measure by Catholic and fundamentalist, and there is far more of dogmatism in modern religious liberalism than most modernists are willing to admit. Were the energy that is still expended in defense of dogma transferred to the search for truth, religion would fare better in all quarters.

[1] "The Philosopher," by Berton Braley. From *The Literary Digest*, December 31, 1921.

If we are to steer between these two destructive attitudes we must have some clear-cut conception of how to judge what is true. Accordingly we shall put most of our attention in this chapter on the criteria by which to know when we have the truth. Truth itself we shall assume to be the agreement of an idea with reality. Any idea I have in my mind is a true idea if it represents to me something as it really is. The agreement of idea with reality is not the only definition of truth: the pragmatist defines it in terms of the practical working of an idea in life. We have not settled the question of the meaning of truth when we say it is agreement with reality,[2] for this opens up in the theory of knowledge a whole nest of questions as to how idea and reality get together. But we must pass over these subtle questions to give our attention to a very practical one. When a person says "What is truth?," he generally means "How may I know what is true?" To this question we now turn.[3]

1. *Criteria of truth.*

(1) *Authority, custom and tradition.* The ordinary criteria of popular thought are those of authority, custom and tradition. From the child who says, "It's so because Mother says so," to the prelate who believes

[2] The term "agreement with reality" is used here in a broad sense, without intending to affirm either a monistic or dualistic theory of the relation of idea to object.

[3] For a more extended discussion of the criteria of truth, see Brightman, *An Introduction to Philosophy,* Ch. II, on which my classification is largely based.

"what Mother Church believes," we derive the larger part of our opinions from the social environment in which we live. Some we get from the influence of our associates; some we get as a heritage from the past through education and early training. When a person says,

> "I'm a Methodist born
> And a Methodist bred,
> And when I die
> There'll be a Methodist dead,"

the chances are that he can give no other reason for being a Methodist. Psychology, and particularly the psychology of the subconscious, is throwing a vast amount of light upon the processes by which our ideals, attitudes and judgments are shaped through imitation and suggestion by the forces which play upon us. The tendency to conservatism is strong within the individual and the race, and when a certain set of religious ideas has become ingrained through long familiarity and endeared through fond associations, only a powerful counter-appeal can eradicate these ideas. Even then, the eradication comes with such a wrench that most of us continue to follow the old familiar path, and frown upon those who stray from it.

The conservatism which bids us cling to the truth-judgments of former days is not wholly evil. It is a necessary bulwark by which to preserve the contributions of the past. But authorities disagree. Customs conflict. Counter-traditions arise. How then shall we

know the truth? And if we look always backward, how shall we go forward? When the authority of book or creed, when the death grip of out-worn tradition or of harmful custom settles down upon the church or state and stifles progress, it is time to shake it loose. Jesus saw that it must be cast off, and his "But I say unto you" stands as an enduring protest against the type of thought which affirms that what "hath been said unto them of old time" must be forever true.

(2) *General agreement.* Closely allied to the criterion of custom is that of *consensus gentium,* or general agreement. The truth of a statement cannot be doubted, it is said, if everybody believes it. "You can't fool all the people all the time."

Our ordinary judgments are largely based on a virtual acceptance of this principle. It is easier to follow the crowd than to do independent thinking. If one ventures to believe that the rest of the world may be mistaken, or even to call in question the opinion of the majority, he pays for his independence by ridicule and social ostracism. (Witness the persecution of pacifists during the war, and the unseating of college professors who ventured to say a kind word for Germany.) Yet all progress has come about through a resolute challenging of accepted views by an intelligent minority.

This criterion—far from being an adequate one—finds its support chiefly in psychological inertia. A slight examination is sufficient to disclose its lameness. In the first place, there is little that is universally

agreed upon. Yet many things are true, and the things least agreed upon are the very ones wherein there is most necessity for getting at the truth. In matters of universal (or well-nigh universal) belief, such as that water is wet and that one must eat to live, experience forces the verdict upon us regardless of the number of its proponents. In disputed matters like the truth of the Einstein theory or the causes of the World War, the question cannot be settled by general agreement, nor even by majority vote. Furthermore, granting that there may be some matters about which everybody agrees, this by no means precludes the possibility that everybody is mistaken. Men lived on the earth for many centuries before it occurred to anybody to doubt that the earth was flat. Only in very recent years have the assumptions of Euclidian geometry or Newtonian physics been challenged. The impossibility of hearing words uttered a thousand miles away was long regarded as axiomatic. Every new discovery invalidates the force of the argument from general agreement.

Applied to religion, this means that the universality of the belief in God cannot be adduced as a logical argument for the validity of that belief. That apparently the people of all ages and all races have had some sort of religious experience is a fact of much significance, the import of which will later be considered. But religion cannot afford to support its case by a

method which will not hold when applied to other fields.

(3) *Desire.* A criterion, or at least a crutch, for a great many of our ordinary judgments is *desire.* As long ago as when Julius Cæsar wrote the story of his Gallic Wars he remarked of his soldiers, "Men most easily believe what they desire to believe." He knew nothing of "rationalization" so-called, but he knew that it was a characteristic trait of human nature to find reasons to support one's desires and prejudices. Francis Bacon uttered a famous warning against the tendency of mankind to fall prey to the "idols of the den":

"The idols of the den are those of each individual; for everybody (in addition to the errors common to the race of man) has his own individual den or cavern, which intercepts and corrupts the light of nature, either from his own peculiar and singular disposition, or from his education and intercourse with others, or from his reading, and the authority acquired by those whom he reverences and admires, or from the different impressions produced on the mind, as it happens to be preoccupied and predisposed, or equable and tranquil, and the like; so that the spirit of man (according to its several dispositions) is variable, confused and, as it were, actuated by chance." [4]

Yet men continue to believe according to their wishes and predispositions. Religion and politics are the fields *par excellence* wherein men most easily believe what they desire to believe. We live, for the most part, on the basis of our emotions rather than our rea-

[4] *Novum Organum,* Book I, Sec. 42.

son. Emotion is not to be esteemed lightly—it is the dynamic which drives men to action—but it is a sorry guide to truth. The primary function of both the scientific and the philosophic temper is to teach men to base belief upon reason rather than upon desire or prejudice.

(4) *Intuition.* It is often asserted that where other evidence fails, truth may be found through intuition. Intuition has various meanings. In the popular use of the term—"a woman's intuition," for example—it means usually a conclusion reached through processes of reasoning or sense experience of which we are not consciously aware, and a study of the subconscious would in most cases find the causal connection. Intuition in its more technical meaning is a sense of immediate certainty. There can be no doubt that there are valid intuitions. All sense experiences as they come to us at first hand are intuitional. When I feel warm I am immediately certain of feeling warm—whatever the thermometer may say, I know how I feel. Likewise there are self-evident truths in logic and mathematics which are so immediately certain to the rational mind that they need no proof. There may also be other valid intuitions in the mystic's vision or the artist's insight into hidden depths of truth.

Intuitions of all these kinds are very valuable sources of truth. But the fact that we get ideas through intuitions does not necessarily prove that these ideas are true, and correspond to something real that exists

outside of us. The fact that I feel warm is indisputable; this fact does not at all prove that the temperature of the room is high, or that other people in it feel warm also. Similarly in intuitions on a loftier plane the certainty they seem to carry may be only subjective and illusory. There are both true and false intuitions.

Particularly is this true in the field of religion. The intense conviction of God's immediate presence is often cited as a final evidence of God's reality. We are told to trust the "inner voice." Yet others, grown psychological and sophisticated, are ready to call this inner voice a sheer hallucination. St. Joan, had she lived in the twentieth century, would doubtless have been sent to a hospital for psychopathics.

There is need of caution here, for a good deal of bad logic has been put forth on both sides. The mystic vision of prophet and seer is by no means to be scorned. Nor ought we lightly to cast aside the religious experience of Sam Jones or Mary Smith, who in a new-found sense of peace can confidently affirm with Paul, "I know whom I have believed." Such an experience is an indubitable fact, and however much it may be analyzed, analysis cannot banish it. On the other hand, there are so-called religious intuitions which are merely psychological hallucinations. Religious fanatics as well as prophets have professed to speak as the oracles of Jehovah. "If there arise in the midst of thee a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams

. . . saying, Let us go after other gods which thou hast not known and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or unto that dreamer of dreams." [5] Not by the intuitional certainty of his speech, but by the content of his message, is the true prophet to be distinguished from the false. The objective truth of any intuition must itself be tested by some further criterion.

(5) *Consequences.* Among the criteria of more critical thought, we find one that is an indigenous product of American soil, the criterion of *pragmatic consequences.* Pragmatism is the only distinctly American philosophy, its most famous exponents being William James and John Dewey. Strictly speaking, it is neither new nor American, for something very much like pragmatism is found in the thought of the Sophist Protagoras. It is rather, as James put it, "a new name for some old ways of thinking." But it had its modern rebirth in this country and is perhaps a reflection of the characteristic American tendency to judge everything in terms of "getting results."

Pragmatism says that an idea is true if it is practical, if it works, if it has satisfactory consequences.[6] This appears at first glance to combine the merits of philosophical respectability and plebeian understandability. Its method is easy, and simple, and verifiable. It can be applied to anything, for whatever has no

[5] Deut. 13: 1-3.

[6] Pragmatism is of several types. This brief treatment makes no pretense of dealing with other than its major principle.

consequences amounts to nothing. It seems particularly applicable to religion, for it is philosophical rephrasing of the plain old Biblical injunction, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

There is much that is of value in pragmatism. In any investigation, religious or otherwise, consequences must be taken into account. Furthermore, the universe being what it is, one cannot long run counter to the universe in thought or act without being in some measure thwarted by the consequences. The most important business of man's life is "living happily and beautifully," so Aristotle said, and if one's beliefs enable him to live more happily and beautifully, there is a strong presumption in favor of their being true. Where the evidence is incomplete it is well to "keep ever on the sunnier side of doubt."

Yet pragmatism cannot carry us all the way toward truth. It is well to achieve practical consequences. But practical for what? Practical for health, or wealth or wisdom? Practical for biological adjustment, or for the attainment of spiritual values? And practical for whom? The prize-fighter has one standard of satisfactory consequences, the candidate for a Ph.D. another. What is one man's meat is another man's poison. The major defect of pragmatism is its ambiguity.

The pragmatist tries to escape this ambiguity by saying that an idea must be tested by its consequences not merely for the individual but for society, not merely in the present but in the long run. But this

does not really get us out of the difficulty. Seldom do we find the whole of society giving an unambiguous verdict, and never do we get the whole of the "long run." The consequences are not all in yet, and will not be till many centuries after all of us are dead. We cannot be sure an idea is true if it "works" until we know all the "workings."

Furthermore, truth and value are not identical. Some statements are true but unimportant; others are untrue but yield desirable results. One may sit and count flies *ad infinitum* without being any better off for the knowledge thus acquired. Yet he may believe that his health is improving when it is not, and the belief may help him to get well! Likewise, in religion, validity and value do not always coincide.

We are driven to the conclusion that practical consequences, and particularly consequences in the long run, are to be taken into account in any judgment of truth; but that consequences alone cannot determine truth. Pragmatism is valuable, yet inadequate, as a criterion. We shall have more to say a little later about its relation to the question of the nature of truth itself.

(6) *Sense perception.* The reader is doubtless getting impatient. For there remains yet to be examined that method without which neither the scientist nor the "man on the street" could make headway in discovering truth; namely, *sense perception.* This is a day of experimentation and verification. Before we are

able to pronounce the words we begin to follow the method. From the baby discovering his toes to the astronomer discovering stars a million light years away, we use the evidence of our senses as the basis of most of our conclusions. Whether there is any knowledge which is not in some way sensory in its origin is a disputed question and one which need not concern us here.

But as we saw with regard to intuition, the origin of our ideas is one thing, an evaluation of their truth is another. Valuable as our senses are in giving us information, they often play us false; and their tricks must be detected by something other than themselves. The victim of delirium tremens who sees snakes, like the bull-dog who plunges into the mirror at his own reflection, is not lacking in keenness of sense organs, but in the use he makes of them. What is needed is not better senses, but more sense!

Likewise, the scientist cannot proceed far without supplementing what his senses give him. He must use instruments which have been devised, not by sense perception only, but far more by the use of reason and constructive imagination. After he has used these instruments to uncover hidden data, he must go a long way beyond the realm of sense in interpreting these data. Nobody can be a successful scientist unless he is able, and willing, to observe and record accurately what experience reveals. Yet it is not accuracy of observation, but the ability to draw correct conclusions

from what observation gives, which distinguishes the great scientist from the laboratory novice.

Furthermore, if sense perception be taken as our only criterion there will be important fields of knowledge wherein we shall be left helpless. For instance, one can never "see" a mathematical truth. It is, of course, entirely possible to cover a blackboard with algebraic formulæ and geometrical figures that are visible—but these are only symbols. A mathematical line has no thickness, a point no size. Mathematical relations can never be adequately pictured; they must be *thought*. The same is true of any abstract idea. The proposition that justice is desirable, or that beauty is better than ugliness, is as unpicturable as that two parallel lines can never meet. Our sense of moral obligation, and all our judgments as to what ideals and values are worth pursuing, are ideas of this type. If we go beyond the realm of sense in so large a part of our thinking, religion cannot be censured if it too affirms unpicturable realities.

Our senses are good servants, in general worthy to be trusted. But they will not give us the whole truth about the universe. Nor will they, unaided, give us the whole truth about any part of it.

(7) *Coherence.* It begins to look as though in our search for a criterion of truth we were pursuing a will-o'-the-wisp. Yet we all continue to draw conclusions every day of our lives, the larger proportion of which turn out to be correct. How, then, do we do it?

Let us proceed negatively by examining how we detect falsehood. Suppose I go to buy a coat. I find one marked $49.50, which the salesman with much volubility assures me was marked down just yesterday from $98. A little later, when I have told him that I do not want an old style coat, he assures me with equal volubility that it "came in just this morning . . . a brand new model." His statements do not seem to hang together. My suspicions are aroused.

Or suppose we go to court, and watch the cross-examination of the witnesses. The lawyer on one side of the case tries to see if he can get the witnesses for the other side to contradict themselves, or to contradict each other. If their stories do not hang together, there is a strong presumption that one or the other is false, and the court so rules.

It is on a similar basis that our judgments about truth in all matters, great and small, must be determined. A statement is true if it is self-consistent throughout, and is consistent with all the information procurable in relation to it. This is called the coherence test.

The criterion of coherence asserts (following the etymological meaning of the term) that a judgment is true if it "hangs together" in all its elements. It has the merit of being applicable to everything, for there is nothing about which any knowledge is obtainable which does not have relations of consistency or contradiction. It is actually employed by everybody, for

one does not have to be a philosopher to determine that there is something wrong with a statement if it contradicts itself. When we put "two and two together," we are putting together the elements of our knowledge to form a consistent whole. The coherence criterion harmonizes with the theory that the universe is a *uni*verse, a oneness, an organic whole, rather than a congeries of unrelated fragments.[7]

It is sometimes said that statements may be devised or beliefs adhered to which are consistently false. The "lie well stuck to" may pass muster for the truth! But this objection holds only on a narrow, short-range view, for the only way to discover that a lie *is* a lie is to discover in it some lack of consistency—some contradiction either within the statement itself or in its relation to the rest of what is known. Two clashing systems may both claim reality, as in a dream world and that of real experience, but at the point where they come together coherence banishes one of them as false. Likewise error in our previous beliefs is detected only by broadening the range of facts which bear on the question and revising our opinions to make them harmonize with each other and with experience as a whole. The earth, for example, was believed to be flat until a contradiction was discovered between its apparent flatness and the possibility of its circumnavigation.

Conversely, elements which appear on the surface

[7] Coherence, because of this relation to a systematic whole, is more than mere consistency, which might be found in a limited set of ideas consistently false.

to be contradictory must not be assumed to constitute real conflicts without a broad examination of all the facts. The earth appears to be flat; yet actually is round. Religion and science appear to conflict; the conflict is found only in a narrow conception of one or the other or both, based usually on inadequate knowledge. The more we learn about the world, the more we discover that its elements fit together into a vast harmonious whole.

Fortified with this coherence test, we can now utilize whatever value has been found in the other criteria we have looked at. What is given by authority or custom or tradition must be scrutinized in the light of its ability to take its place in the "vision of the whole." What is generally agreed upon is true, when it is true, because the judgments of mankind have eliminated the most striking contradictions. Desire and feeling must be tested by their rational coherence with the rest of the experiences of life. Intuition gives us subjective certainty; its objective truth must be tested by a coherent fitting together of all the facts. Consequences must be regarded as important elements in any truth-judgment, but as elements only, not the whole. Sense data likewise afford the raw materials of much of our experience, but this experience must be tested by its ability to harmonize with itself, and with life in its totality. Freedom from contradiction is the final test.

Applied to religion, this means that the propositions to be believed are those which are self-consistent and which harmonize with experience as we know it. Our

materials must be drawn from many sources. The sense experience, the value judgments, the customs, the thought life of the individual and the race must all be scrutinized. Wherever men have thought they perceived a revelation of the divine, such revelations must be reverently, yet open-mindedly, examined. We shall not hope for proof on either side of the question. But if we find a preponderance of evidence in favor of belief, we shall be justified in believing.

2. *Is there any absolute truth?*

We began the chapter with some observations upon the need of something solid and dependable in truth. Our survey of the criteria has suggested that there is real truth to be found, and that the coherence criterion will be our most effective tool in the attempt to find it. But before we close we ought to look briefly at the question of whether, strictly speaking, there is any "real" or absolute truth. Are the ideas which we hold as true in the last analysis merely a matter of individual opinion—perhaps at best only the accepted opinion of our age and group? Or is there a real, objective truth which is eternal and absolute and independent of varying opinion? It is a large question. We can merely touch the fringes of it here and take a glance at its implications.[8]

[8] It relates to the whole metaphysical problem of the need of an Absolute. For an excellent study of the deeper meaning of the question, see W. E. Hocking, *The Meaning of God in Human Experience,* Ch. XIV.

Scepticism denies that there is any absolute truth. But scepticism refutes itself. The kind of scepticism which says that we cannot really know anything at all cuts off its own head without further ado; for if we cannot know anything, it follows that we cannot know this fact either! This type of scepticism has seldom been seriously defended. The urgent demands of life, as of logic, require us to believe that there are some things of which we can be sure.

A more common kind of scepticism says that we cannot know anything except what our senses can grasp. This view is more tenable, and more subtle. In its purest form it was held by David Hume, and with modifications by others of the English school of empiricists. It survives to the present day in positivism, the view that we can have "positive" knowledge of what we can get by scientifically verifiable sense experience, and not of anything else. Positivism usually grants also the validity of the rational inferences necessary to interpret sense experience, and thus fails to abide strictly by its premises. While it has done good service in curtailing our pretensions, the attempt to escape being dogmatic by becoming positive has not been altogether successful. Certain objections to its position have already been suggested in examining the legitimacy of faith and the use of the criterion of sense experience.

Furthermore, this kind of scepticism, like the more thoroughgoing type, refutes itself if taken consistently

and literally. For the truth of the theory itself falls outside the field of sense experience on which it rests its case. The idea that we can know nothing except what our senses can give us is not a thing to be seen, heard, tasted, smelled, or handled. It is an idea to be conceived logically by an act of thought; and no amount of sense experience alone would give us the idea. If everything but sense experience must go, every theory rationally conceived, including this theory, must go. Rigidly adhered to, it becomes ensnared in its own meshes.[9]

Pragmatism also, as a theory of the nature of truth, denies that truth is absolute. This aspect of pragmatism raises a somewhat different problem from pragmatism as a theory of the criterion of truth.[10] The pragmatic criterion, as the method of testing the truth of an idea by its fruits, is sometimes joined with the idea that there is an absolute truth of which we get knowledge through an examination of its effects in experience. We have noted that this criterion affords a valuable, though not completely adequate, means of testing truth. However, pragmatism as a theory of the nature of truth goes further and asserts that truth *is* the practical working of an idea in experience. Truth is then no longer defined as agreement of idea

[9] Cf. Brightman, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 70 f.

[10] Pragmatism as a criterion and pragmatism as a theory of the meaning of truth shade into each other without sharp differentiation. The term pragmatism is used in various senses by different pragmatists.

with reality; [11] it is defined in terms of consequences, and the truth of an idea is the way it works. This makes truth relative rather than absolute; for if consistent, such a view must grant that truth itself is as variable as its effects in life.[12] This does not mean that the pragmatist is willing to let the effects in any single instance determine truth; it is effects in general, and effects in the long run, which he appeals to. But since, as we noted earlier, we never get all of the effects or the whole of the long run, and there is ambiguity of judgment about what we do get, an element of relativity necessarily inheres in the pragmatic theory.

But pragmatism, like scepticism, refutes itself. If every truth depends upon the satisfactory consequences of an idea, so must the truth of pragmatism. But as soon as we begin to suspect that we do not have real truth but only satisfactory consequences, the consequences themselves are no longer satisfactory! For instance, as soon as we say that we are to believe the idea of God, not because it is really true but because it has a good practical effect, the effect slips away. Similarly if we say that we will hold to pragmatism, not because it is really true but because it works well, we get such a suspicion of its untruth that it ceases to

[11] *Supra*, p. 51.

[12] A pragmatist of considerable standing has defended the proposition that the Ptolemaic theory of the universe was true two thousand years ago, as the Copernican is today.

work. Pragmatism, like scepticism, if it is consistent cuts the ground from under its own feet.

Any theory which affirms the relativity of truth is bound to be self-refuting. In the very act of affirming the variability of truth we use eternal logical principles to make comparisons and detect the variation. These principles were not made by experience. Rather, they are presupposed in all experience that is rational, and without them we could not fit our ideas together to get any meaning. If truth is a body of variable judgments gathered through experience, *and only that,* it is not even that—it is a mere hodge-podge. It is the absolute element within the process which organizes our experience and makes it meaningful. Drop this out, and not even relative truth remains.

We are driven back to the conclusion that there is a real truth, an absolute and eternal truth. If scepticism, or pragmatism, or any other view is a *true* view of the matter, it is true because it is grounded in the nature of things and in certain eternal logical principles. Truths vary, of course, as things vary—it was true an hour ago that the sun was shining and now the weather is cloudy. But the truth did not change because my opinion changed; on the contrary, my opinion was forced to change by an alteration in the nature of things. The logical standards which give me a right to hold a certain opinion as true never change. The truths of mathematics never change, though our apprehension of these truths may constantly be en-

larged. And though we are not here discussing values, we shall later see some reasons for supposing that there is a real goodness and a real beauty, as well as a real truth, which exists eternally and is independent of our varying opinions. The basic principles which give meaning to our shifting experiences and imperfect glimpses of the truth are eternal and absolute.

. . . .

What does all this mean for religion? It means, in the first place, that if truth is thus solidly grounded in the nature of reality we need have no fear that the foundations of religious belief will be swept away by changes in opinion or circumstance. The *acceptance* of religious truth is likely to be uncertain and variable; the foundations of such truth will stand.

It means, furthermore, that we must carefully distinguish between our changing concepts and the eternal truth. For example, when one speaks of a "growing God," one must be quite sure whether he means really a growing God or a growing idea of God. God himself may grow—this is a doubtful metaphysical point. It is an assured certainty that the idea of God has grown, and has taken on the color of its times. A recognition of the latter by no means commits us to the former.

It means also that we need to be cautious in asserting that we have found the absolute truth. There must be something absolute as the foundation for even our partial, relative, fragmentary glimpses of the truth.

But only a being as omniscient as God could know wholly and inerrantly this truth. Some truth we can attain, and we ought to grasp as much of it as we can. The coherence criterion will aid us in the quest. But some will forever elude the grasp of imperfect human minds.

And finally, an absolute truth points to an Absolute Mind as its source and foundation. Though much of our knowledge must necessarily be incomplete and subject to revision as we get new light, this does not condemn us to the rejection of all religious knowledge as untrue, uncertain or variable. With the assurance that truth rests on something solid in the nature of things, and with a dependable criterion of truth, we may also look with confidence to a dependable cosmic foundation of the whole structure of reality and truth.

We shall have more to say of this cosmic foundation when we discuss the evidences for God's existence. Suffice it to say here that in the midst of our variable standards and changing concepts, the problem of truth points for its ultimate solution to a God "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." We shall now try to see whether a coherent examination of experience leads to the conclusion that such a God exists.

CHAPTER V

IS THERE A GOD?—OBSTACLES TO BELIEF

The belief in God is vital to religion. The unique element of religion is worship, and the sense of dependence upon a power that is more than human. If the belief in God dies, religion must die with it or be radically transformed.

Were theistic faith to disappear, a code of ethics would survive which for a time would be called religion. Then the label would probably disappear. The church would likewise stand for a time, transformed in its function, but still purporting to spread the cult of a humanized religion. It is rather futile to let one's fancy run, but if one may judge from trends already observable, it is entirely conceivable that the future may witness the abandonment of the Church of God, and the substitution of a Cult of Man in which the glorification of human comfort will replace religious worship.

To some, the passing of theistic religion would seem no loss. If people can be good without it, why bother with it? Why not let scientific sociology, and psychology, and physiology, do duty for religion? There are glands and complexes in plenty to occupy our attention—why continue the "mummery" of hymns and prayers? These are insistent questions, and we have

already given them some attention in our second chapter.

We must attack squarely the question of whether the belief in God makes a difference—a difference so vital that it is worth preserving at the cost of some stalwart intellectual effort. Appearances are against it. The path of least resistance (after one's childhood faith receives a jolt) is to throw over the whole business. Or one may dodge the question by finding something else to think about. "I don't know—why should I worry?" "Nobody knows—why get all fussed up over it?" With an air of nonchalance youth (and often middle-age) puts aside its religious worries—and goes off to a ball-game or a joy-ride.

But the question bobs up again. The tragic facts of life lie too close to the surface of existence—even the existence of the most care-free—to permit many people permanently to close their minds to the question as to whether life has any meaning beyond the obvious. When death enters the circle of those that are loved, when "hopes deceive and fears annoy," most people want to know whether there is a God back of it all. "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him" has been the recurrent heart-cry of the ages.

Some people lose their faith in God through suffering. Of this we shall have much more to say in a later chapter. We are here concerned mainly to consider the obstacles to belief arising through intellectual doubt. The teaching of philosophical or psychological materi-

alism has made many an atheist in these later years. The teaching of science has made a few; the teaching of science in combination with a cynical disregard of religious values and an out-spoken contempt for the "vagaries" of religion has made many more.

A few years ago an anonymous letter appeared in the Contributor's Column of the *Atlantic Monthly* which states so accurately the experience of thousands that I shall quote it almost in full.

"I was brought up in an atmosphere of deep religious faith, and my introduction to philosophy and the sciences at college came in the nature of a tremendous, though inevitable, shock. Even then I clung to my faith in the fundamentals, such as a personal God and immortality; but two years of behavioristic psychology effected my reluctant conversion to materialism. The heart refused to follow where the mind did not lead, and reason told me that an impersonal Life Force was the most logical of the deistic conceptions. It didn't matter so much in college, where life was filled with examinations, and philosophical discussions, and different 'courses'; but I was graduated in '22 (from an Eastern women's college), and since then there has been a void which no substitute can fill.

"T. (my husband) . . . asks tolerantly, 'But why isn't merging with the Infinite at death just as beautiful and desirable as preserving one's identity through countless ages? Is there any particular reason why your identity should be so carefully preserved? Why not enjoy the here and now, and since there is no proof either way, let the future take care of itself?'

"He doesn't understand that if he should die I couldn't go on living without some hope, however faint, of being with him again. This, I realize, is a weakness; an unwill-

ingness to face probable facts; and a deluding myself with sentimentalities.

"For three years I have been trying to construct my own creed—a creed to which I can subscribe not only emotionally but intellectually. (Why is religion such an affair of the emotions!) Perhaps God is Mind, I say, since reason seems to be the summum bonum of evolution. Our own rationality might be the faintest, farthest emanations of the divine Mind. 'What, mind apart from brain' exclaims my behavioristic training, rising up in holy horror, 'or thought apart from implicit bodily processes! What heresy!' Psychology, with devilish ingenuity, has a naturalistic explanation for my every postulate. Being of a religious nature, I must worship something; and this wealth of spiritual energy seems gradually to be focusing on T. as its only available outlet. If he should die—!

"Churches have become impossible, if only from the personal conflict they engender. The music and the atmosphere give rise to the old familiar emotions, and yet all through the sermon something within me is coldly, impersonally, cynically analyzing and pronouncing judgment. 'Illustrating the projection of the ego . . . an appeal to the emotions. . . . Doesn't he know that's a scientific untruth? . . . Good drama; wish Professor B. could hear that! . . . reassuring to man's helplessness before cosmic forces . . .' The prayer becomes a farce; the whole service merely an absurd attempt to propitiate a Life Force by songs and prayers and the incense of flowers. I can't, like T., 'enjoy the atmosphere and feel like being a better citizen when I come out.' My intelligence is insulted; I feel tricked, duped, to think that this was allowed to mean so much to me in my childhood and adolescence.

"I reject it, but I have no substitute. Is there none, *Atlantic?*" [1]

Here we have the picture: the faith of childhood gone, nothing to take its place. A heart that must wor-

[1] Contributor's Column, *Atlantic Monthly,* April, 1925.

ship something; no God to worship. "Churches have become impossible"; immortality has become a hope freighted with despair. Is there an answer to her question?

1. *Arguments against belief.*

That a belief is precious does not prove that it is true. But it proves that it is worth retaining, if it can be retained. Let us look now at the objections which from many minds have banished belief in God.

(1) *A glorified superstition.* The objection most commonly raised against the belief in God is that it is sheer superstition. As men's time-honored beliefs in witches and demons and haunted houses have been surrendered with the onward march of intelligence, the belief in God is the last ghost to be laid. The tendency to personify, which is characteristic of the childhood of the individual and the race, has brought about a personification of man's own ego, it is asserted, and this empty personification of human wishes has assumed through the ages the changing forms which men have called their gods. As primitive man found a superhuman spirit in the wailing of the wind in the treetops, and as the early Semites conceived a god who came down to earth and walked with men in the garden in the cool of the day, so the God of the twentieth century turns out to be merely an anthropomorphic product of man's imaginings. The Genesis statement must be reversed, for man has created God in his own image. This ghostly, non-existent vestige of the superstition of

a by-gone age is still ignorantly worshipped by the unenlightened with "songs and prayers and the incense of flowers."

(2) *A symbol of human desire.* A corollary of this objection in slightly more conservative dress, is the belief that God exists, but exists merely as the symbol of certain ideal qualities projected in human minds. God is thus a personification of ideals—a sort of glorified Uncle Sam.[2] Exponents of this view hold that the idea of God is a personification of the human "will to power," changing, as man's thinking changes, from a God of wrath and vengeance to a God of love and human brotherhood. This idea of God, potent for good or ill according to the type of qualities symbolized, is not to be rejected outright, but reconstructed. So long as it affords a prop to the morality of the masses, it is worth retaining, but the intelligent must harbor no illusions. God exists as idea, but faith in God as a real more-than-human being must be cast into the discard of exploded fallacies.

(3) *Unknown and unknowable.* A different type of objection asserts that God, if he exists, is unknowable because outside the realm of human experience. Since God cannot be seen, heard, handled, or perceived by any of the senses it is assumed that he cannot be known. From this it is a short step to the conclusion that the belief in God is sheer credulity. It is some-

[2] See an article by Edward Scribner Ames in the symposium, *My Idea of God,* by eighteen religious leaders, for an able presentation of this point of view. Also his *Religion,* 1929.

times added that if there were a God, he would have given us unmistakable knowledge of himself; hence it is irrational to suppose that one exists. Or taking a different turn, the argument asserts that it would be impossible for imperfect men to know a perfect being if one existed. We are bidden to stick to what is known and stop building our hopes on mysteries.

(4) *Scientifically untenable.* Another line of argument attempts to prove by scientific evidence that the belief in God has become unnecessary and untenable. It is asserted that the progress of modern science, particularly in biology, sociology, and psychology, has made it entirely possible to give a naturalistic explanation of all the functions formerly ascribed to God. Natural selection and the survival of the fittest are said to have banished not only Adam and Eve but their reputed creator. The study of the social origin of codes and customs and their transmission through human institutions are said to afford a sufficient explanation of human conduct without the positing of any superhuman power. Psychology also "has a naturalistic explanation for my every postulate," and bids us drop the mythical "soul" (whether human or divine) and replace it with a study of the physical organism with its mechanisms and conditioned reflexes. And since there is nothing left for God to do, and no place for him to exist in, we may as well bid good-bye to the idea.

(5) *Non-physical, therefore unreal.* This tendency

is indicative of an objection which, in a sense, undergirds all the others mentioned; namely, the materialistic assumption that nothing in the universe is real save physical matter. If this assumption be proved true, it is obvious that the belief in God must go. Whatever God may be, he certainly is not the combination of flesh and blood and bone which constitutes a physical body. Whatever the Holy Spirit may be, it is not the central nervous system of a cosmic biological organism. In former days men could conceive of God in terms of physical anthropomorphism, but the religion of today must have a spiritual God or none.

(6) *The problem of suffering.* All the foregoing objections rest on intellectual, or at least semi-intellectual, grounds. But there is another which is ever-present—one which grips the most illiterate peasant with the same strangle-hold as the most enlightened scientist. This is the grim fact of human suffering. When men from the depths of anguish have cried in vain for release to a heaven apparently deaf to their cry, the name of God has more than once seemed a mockery. The suffering entailed by the World War, for example, has doubtless made more atheists than our preachers will convert for many a day.

2. *Are these objections valid?*

These objections constitute a formidable array. Can they be answered? It has been wisely remarked that the worst service one can render a good cause is to

defend it by bad arguments. In most of the objections enumerated, there is a measure of truth which must be taken into account. But formidable as they appear, the case for religion is not yet lost.

(1) *Is the belief in God a superstition?* In regard to the statement that the belief in God is merely a superstition—a personification of man's imaginings—it may be granted, (1) that the belief in God can be traced back to lowly origins in prehistoric days; (2) that in the beginning, and all through the ages, a good deal of superstition has been mingled with religion; (3) that religion even in its highest forms can conceive of God only under the categories of human experience. Having made these admissions, we are ready to attempt an answer.

It must be noted in the first place that neither the value nor the truth of a belief is conditioned by its origin. If religion is to be condemned because of its crude beginnings, so must science, for science likewise started on the plane of primitive superstition. Not many of us are ready to reject the findings of modern chemistry because chemistry began in alchemy, nor of astronomy because its progenitor was astrology.

Nor can the presence of superstition intermingled with the belief in God afford a valid reason for rejecting it *in toto*. Truth must be sifted from superstition by the criterion of coherence. So tested, many of the concepts formerly attached to the idea of God—the concepts of physical anthropomorphism, of jealousy

and wrath and vengeance—must be cast out as unscientific and untrue. Man's idea of God, like his knowledge of the physical world, has been a growing concept which has mirrored the progressive development of thought. The truth, and man's conception of the truth, are not identical. But the presence of imperfections in man's idea of God in no wise disproves the reality of God. If it did, we should have to say on a parity of reasoning that no round earth existed while men thought it flat and that no disease germs existed before the era of Pasteur and Koch.

The idea that God is merely an imaginary construct, the projection of human experience, seems to a good many minds to bear considerable weight. We are often warned that man is creating God after his own likeness. Some twenty-five centuries ago, Xenophanes observed, "The Ethiopians make their gods black and snub-nosed; the Thracians give theirs red hair and blue eyes." From this tendency of man to think of God in terms of human traits, it is urged that if man were different, his god (or gods) would be different, and the personal God of theistic faith would vanish away. It is even suggested—half-facetiously, half-seriously—that if man were of a subhuman order of existence, a frog or fish perhaps, his god would have froglike or fishlike traits! [3]

This objection glimpses a great truth; then misses

[3] Cf. Xenophanes, "If oxen or lions had hands, and could paint with their hands and produce works of art as men do, horses would paint the forms of the gods like horses and oxen like oxen."

its way by overlooking another truth, equally great but somewhat less obvious. It is true that man's conception of God is inevitably anthropomorphic, and has shifted with man's shifting experiences. But so is all the rest of our knowledge anthropomorphic! All human ideas have borne the impress of the human, and have varied with varying experiences. All the knowledge we have, or can have, of anything whatsoever is knowledge conceived in terms of human experience.

Probably the world does not look the same to a frog or a fish as it does to a man. But men are not frogs or fishes. We are forced to think in concepts that human experience gives if we think at all.

Science in dealing with the world of physical nature has much to say of strains and resistances, of energy and power, of growth and change. All are concepts borrowed from human experience; for what would we know of strain, or energy, or growth, did not man experience them? These concepts, man-experienced and man-engendered, are then applied in actual living to an external world—a world not imagined, but *believed for reasons of coherence to be existent.* Religion must follow a similar procedure. Its God, though conceived in terms of human experience, is not on that account any less real. God *is,* or he *is not*—and the fact that a belief is man-formed, humanly conditioned, has nothing to do with its truth. Whether the belief be true depends upon its coherence with all the evidence which human experience can muster. The belief in God is

not a superstition unless, like other superstitions, it fails to coordinate with the rest of the accepted facts of life.

(2) *Is God a mere symbol of human desire?* The answer to this question has been suggested in the foregoing statement. "An honest God is the noblest work of man." Yes. But would man in a world of blind physical forces ever have conceived a desire for an honest God, incarnating his highest ideals? For man to fabricate a God of the type revealed in the life and words of Jesus, and then to maintain faith through the centuries in such a God, would be a miracle. If man has been self-deceived, feeding the fires of his religious faith on a vast illusion, it is the only illusion which has ever remade the world.

Our knowledge of God is in some measure symbolic. But this does not brand it as untrue. Human limitations constrain us to speak in similes and symbols. The most familiar of these, applied to God, is that of fatherhood. (Hence, certain up-to-the-minute psychologists would catalogue the Christian religion as a "Father-complex"!) [4] The father symbol is not a full description of God: to know God fully one would need to be as omniscient as God himself. The symbol is merely the means of mediating to our thought the reality which lies behind the symbol; and the Christian faith asserts that our nearest approach to a grasp of

[4] See Sigmund Freud, *Totemism and Taboo* and *The Future of an Illusion*. Freud places the origin of religion in the Œdipus complex.

the real nature of God is to conceive him in terms of self-giving love and protecting care. Hence, "our Father."

It must not be forgotten that a symbol to be of any value (indeed, to be a symbol at all) must be a symbol of something real. Certain bits of red, white and blue cloth put together in certain relations make a flag. Why is it that we let no enemy or upstart burn our flag or trample upon it, while the same amount of red, white and blue cloth—as cloth—could be used to mop the floor and nobody care? It is because the flag is a symbol of something very real and precious—of our country, and its honor, and our duty to give it our love and loyalty. Likewise the idea of God, if it is to mean anything as a symbol, must stand for something which is more than a symbol. It is a limping logic which bids us preserve the idea of God as a moral incentive, and surrender faith in God's reality. Men will not long be hoodwinked if they know it. Men will not die for bits of bunting, if they are only bunting. Neither will they live for the service of God, if there be no God to serve.

(3) *Is God beyond our knowledge?* The objection to faith in God which is raised by philosophic positivism, and on less critical grounds by a good deal of unphilosophical, half-digested religious doubt, asserts that we have no right to believe what we cannot know. Implied in this argument is always the assumption that all we can "know" is sense experience, and since we

cannot know God with our senses, he must remain forever beyond our grasp.

The chapters dealing with the legitimacy of faith and the meaning of truth have already answered this objection in a measure. We saw there that we can "know" very little in the strict sense of the term; yet we have grounds in the use of the coherence criterion for holding to the truth of a great many things. It remains now for us to inquire whether God is really so far outside of experience that we do not, and cannot, know him.

Let us split this query up into four others: (1) Is sense experience all there is? (2) Can we know God through our senses? (3) Can a perfect God be known by imperfect men? (4) Why did not God give us clearer knowledge of himself, if he exists?

By sense experience we mean, of course, that which comes to us through the sense organs—our awareness of what we see, hear, taste, smell, and touch. It is through these organs that we get our knowledge of the outside world, and if a person were born without them he could probably acquire no knowledge. From this fact it is often argued that whatever cannot be observed through the senses is unknowable.

But is sense experience everything? I hear a bell which warns me that it is time to gather up my books and start for class. The sound I hear is one thing, the consciousness of obligation which bids me hasten to arrive before my class vanishes is quite another. The

love of a mother for her babe is not identical with the baby's gurgles or the mother's caresses. The love of beauty in the soul of the artist is not identical with the landscape he sees before him, nor with the one he puts on canvas for others to see. The patriot's devotion to his country consists not in the waving of flags nor in the roar of cannons. Mathematical truth is not identical with the symbols which express it—it is something as invisible and unpicturable as God.

In each of these instances it is true that without sense organs there would be no knowledge, and no experience. It is probably true that without sense organs we would know nothing of God, and would have no experience of God. But it does not follow that what can be seen, heard, smelled, tasted, and touched is all that can be known. If there are genuine inner experiences such as the urge of duty, the love of other persons, the appreciation of beauty and the grasp of reasoned truth which are not of a sensory nature, sense experience is not all. It is unquestionable that such experiences exist, and that they give us knowledge as important as that based directly on the evidence of our senses. "The existence and progressive realization of an ideal of spirituality is as genuine a fact as the existence of mud or of earthquakes." [5] And through such experiences men find God.

To pass to our second query, is it true that God is hidden from our senses? In a sense, yes. We cannot

[5] Brightman, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 286.

hope to see or hear or handle him. But if we rule out all the invisibles, the inaudibles, the imponderables, many beliefs accepted as scientific fact must go. This is true even of many facts in the physical world. Nobody has ever seen the other side of the moon. Nobody now living has ever lived, or can live, in the era of the dinosaurs. Nobody has penetrated, or can penetrate, more than a few thousand feet into the interior of the earth. Yet few would doubt the real existence of any of these. We get our knowledge in such cases, not from direct experience, but from inferences based on what experience offers.

Where we see evidences of work we can infer a worker—in fact, without seeing the person we can tell quite accurately what sort of workman he is. Purposeful activity betokens a purposing mind—of this we shall have more to say in the next chapter. In religion we must draw conclusions from the evidences experience supplies, and our senses give us many evidences which point to God. God reveals himself in the beauty, the grandeur, the intricacy of the physical world.

> "Fire and hail, snow and vapor;
> Stormy wind, fulfilling his word:
> Mountains and all hills;
> Fruitful trees and all cedars:
> Beasts and all cattle;
> Creeping things and flying fowl:"

unite to proclaim the existence and the greatness of

God. There is more than a poetic rhapsody in the statement that the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Only on the hypothesis of a God-made and God-directed world can we explain the fact that this appears to be a world of natural law in which all things work together in an all-inclusive harmonious system. If we proceed as in other fields by drawing conclusions from what experience gives, we find reason to believe that an ordering Mind is thus revealed.

The third question (about the possibility of knowing perfection) is answered in experience. In every field of thought we possess knowledge which is not complete but which is valid as far as it goes. I do not need to know all there is to know about mathematics to be able to make change. I do not need to be an Edison to turn on an electric light. Neither do I need to be as omniscient as God to know something of his nature. The argument from the imperfection of man's powers, if applied consistently, would make all search for truth a futile quest.

Our fourth query, as to why God does not give full knowledge of himself if he exists and wants us to believe in his existence, is both easy and difficult to answer. In one sense, it is quite on a par with the observation of the old lady who said it was impious to dig coal, for if the Lord had wanted us to get it he would have put it on top of the ground.

But the problem goes further than this. If we

could investigate God and chart and tabulate our findings with the same precision with which we chart and tabulate the results of an experiment in chemistry, it would put an end to much uncertainty. We should not then know all about him—no experiment in chemistry tells us all about the thing investigated—but we should have little doubt that God exists. If God had given us more certain knowledge of himself, we should be glad.

Yet this loss of certainty is not without its gains. There is probably more of challenge to faith and love and hope, more of incentive to moral earnestness and loyalty of endeavor, in a world of glorious possibles than in one of finished finalities. Had God given us *no* knowledge of himself, we would have been left Godless, and religion would never have been. Had he given *all* knowledge of himself, there would have been less of challenge to religious insight. There is a finished certainty about the multiplication table or a set of logarithms which religion does not possess, but it is doubtful whether we would want religion to possess it. It is our aspirations and our hopes, the things we are *not* sure of, "the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen," on which we build our most worthful structures.

God has given us a revelation of himself in nature, in history, in the sacred literatures of mankind, in the experience of seers and common folk, preëminently in Christ. He has not given indisputable knowledge of

himself, but neither has he left himself without a witness.

(4) *Does science banish God?* The argument from the conflict of science with religion occupied the center of the stage some fifty years ago, and by a strange resuscitation has returned. Not that it was ever wholly dormant! From the days of Roger Bacon and Galileo, science has forged its way in the face of opposition from the guardians of the religious heritage, and religion has had to maintain its hold in the face of an unfeeling and often flippant scientific dogmatism. There have been truces; never a treaty of peace.

To a religious liberal who feels that he has settled the conflict permanently in his own mind, these centuries of strife, and particularly the anti-evolution laws, "monkey trials," and other weird outbursts of the present day, are apt to look like tragic folly. And so they are, in a sense. They are tragic in the strife they engender; foolish in their retardation of both science and religion. But there is a reason for them.

At bottom the religio-scientific controversy rests back, not merely on prejudice or the perversity of human nature (though plenty of both have been in evidence) but on a difference in the purposes of science and religion. As we saw in the chapter on faith, science and religion are alike in many ways. Both use the experimental method, forming hypotheses and testing them in experience; both seek to arrive at truth, groping for a clearer understanding of the world we

live in; both try to make this truth available for human betterment. But they diverge on the *kind* of truth, and the *kind* of human betterment. In short, science is concerned primarily with facts, and the application of these facts to the external conditions of life. Religion is concerned primarily with values, and the deepening of these values in the inner springs of life.

Both these objectives are legitimate enough. Both are fundamental to a well-ordered life and a well-ordered world. There ought to be no conflict. But there is a conflict; and the conflict will continue to wreck churches, wrench the minds of the religiously-troubled, retard science (or attempt to), and make religion a laughing-stock, until we get a basis for theistic faith which allows full freedom to any legitimate search for scientific truth. And, since "turn about is fair play," science must cease its flippancy, its dogmatism, its attempt to usurp the whole field. Science must recognize that religious values are as much a part of the life of man as the search for new knowledge of the physical universe—indeed, a much greater part of the life of the common man, and most of us are common men. By fair play on both sides and a recognition of the legitimacy of each other's field—only so will science and religion ever walk together, and be agreed.

There was time when religion had the upper hand; the Church could suppress its Galileos. Now science is in the saddle; religion has more to lose than science

from a continuance of conflict. To be specific, the Dayton trial probably won not a single evolutionist to the anti-evolution ranks; it lessened the hold of religion upon thousands by the subtle forces of laughter and disgust. Externally the anti-evolutionists won; inwardly the cause they fought for lost. However the scientists may feel about it, the friends of religion ought to learn something from this and similar experiences!

. . . .

The problem before us is whether new advances in science, if we grant the findings of science to be true, banish the foundations for belief in God. The sciences most directly concerned with man himself—biology, sociology, psychology—are the chief storm-centers. Let us briefly look at each of these.

In the field of biology the heart of the controversy is, of course, the theory of biological evolution. Since the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859, the storm has not abated, though there have been temporary lulls and areas of calm. The religious life of Europe has so far settled the question that it looks upon American fundamentalism's opposition to evolution as a grotesque phenomenon. In practically all intellectual centers throughout the world, our evolutionary ancestry is regarded as an accepted fact. Darwin's theory has undergone modifications, and many biologists do not accept the mechanistic implications of his theory of natural selection. But no rep-

utable biologist doubts the essential features of the evolutionary theory.

Why then does fundamentalist religion fight it? Mainly, I think, for three reasons. (1) It seems to eliminate the creative power of God. (2) It seems to contradict the Bible. (3) It seems to belittle man.

Notice that we say "seems to." The religious liberal who has faced the question to a settlement finds in evolution a greater God than before. A God who can direct the processes of the development of life through millions of years, a God who can create and coordinate the thousand million intricate processes which have entered into the shaping of our biological organism, a God who can crown the whole process of creation with the making of a human soul—so infinitely superior in power and possibilities to the nearest subhuman ancestor—is no less a God than a God of fiat creation. Whether God made man of "the dust of the earth" in a moment, or through millions of years, is of little import compared with the fact that God made him. "In the beginning, God created." And unless God created the world and has directed its ongoings, as religion holds, we are left with a stark, blank mystery on our hands which no scientist can fathom.

Except for its seeming contradiction with the Biblical account of creation, the evolutionary theory would have had less of struggle to make its way. To many, the Bible is the revealed word of God, to be accepted literally "from cover to cover" as it stands; and if

Genesis says that God made Adam and Eve on the sixth day and put them in the garden of Eden, away with evolution! The whole question of Biblical interpretation is too complex to be dealt with in a sentence or paragraph. It is the crucial point of divergence in the fundamentalist-modernist controversy, and both sides have made mistakes. A literal interpretation of the Bible mortgages one's mind and conceals much of its deeper spiritual truth; a flippant rejection of the Bible is even more fatal to religious insight. The middle course which studies the Bible historically and sees in it a great spiritual revelation mediated to us—as "heavenly treasure in earthen vessels"—through the thought-concepts of an earlier day, has no great difficulty with the Genesis story. The Genesis account of creation is crude science—but it was never intended as a scientific treatise. Properly understood, it has a great religious message of the power of the Creator and the dignity of his supreme creation, and this in no wise is invalidated by the acceptance of the evolutionary theory. The Genesis story gives us the creator, the material, and the product; biology adds only the process.

The third reason for evolution's stormy passage is the fact that it seems to belittle man. This is not quite so obvious as the other two factors, but lies at the bottom of a great deal of the controversy. William Jennings Bryan fought with all the sincerity of a great soul against the acceptance of evolution, partially for

the reasons already mentioned—fundamentally, I think, as a protest against the tendency of mechanistic naturalism to make of man "nothing but" an animal. Man is an animal; of that fact biology and common sense alike assure us. But if man is *nothing but* an animal, a mere bundle of biological reflexes, with his actions governed by physico-chemical forces as ethically indifferent as the forces that govern the stars and atoms, then man is "like the beasts that perish." And when man loses faith in himself, no other faith can hope to stand.

What is man? This question is so vital that we shall attempt at some length in a later chapter to answer it. Suffice it to say at this point that *origin* in no wise determines the present nature or value of anything. Astronomically, our earth is what it is, regardless of whether the nebular hypothesis or the planetesimal theory be the correct account of its origin.[6] The art that produced the Sistine Madonna is what it is, regardless of the fact that human art began in crude drawings on the walls of caves. The fact that man has probably a simian ancestry does not make him an ape. Nothing can degrade him to the level of the beast except the will to act in bestial fashion. It is man's crowning glory that he has *risen*. Not the descent but the *ascent* of man is evolution's major mes-

[6] See Kirtley F. Mather, *Our Mother Earth,* Ch. II, for a simple account of these hypotheses. This volume also contains much valuable material bearing on the general problem of the relation of science to religion.

sage, and it offers a promise and potency of heights yet unattained.

We must pass more hurriedly over the relation of sociological science to faith in God. The problem here is closely linked with the history of ethics, and centers in the question of whether human conduct can be adequately explained in terms of group *mores* without reference to the directing agency of God.

Much confusion has arisen here from a failure to distinguish between the scientifically observable aspects of the question and the metaphysical meaning which lies back of them. It is entirely possible to carry through a scientific study of the development of moral codes and social institutions without any reference to supernatural causes, and loyalty to the scientific method requires that this be done. Morality, like the custom of wearing clothes, is no longer thought of as something mysteriously let down from heaven or arbitrarily imposed by divine command. The social conventions which regulate conduct have developed under human conditions from human instincts and tendencies, and are in no small measure the product of climatic and other environmental conditions. Transmitted from generation to generation and age to age through imitation and the training of the young, they gradually advance toward higher forms; and the laws of social progress can be formulated in fairly accurate terms. The study of these processes has rendered much service

to human welfare, for it has made possible a more intelligent direction of the course of social evolution.

But here the province of sociology, as a science, stops. The sociologist is as powerless as the biologist to tell the ultimate source of the laws of social progress, or the ultimate purpose they express. Why a world of social relations at all? Why altruism and self-sacrifice in a world of strife? Whence the new emergents that make for progress? Whither is human progress bound? Sociology can state the facts; metaphysics—and religion—must give meaning to these facts. If there is any *real* goodness or truth or beauty—any standard of values other than the shifting social *mores* that vary from place to place and age to age, such values and standards must be grounded in the purposes of a more-than-human power. In the familiar words of Tennyson, there must be

> "One God, one law, one element,
> And one far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves."

If we interrogate *psychology* as to its attitude toward the belief in God, we must note carefully what kind of psychology we are dealing with. The current behaviorism, insofar as it reduces mind or consciousness solely to bodily behavior, or makes it merely a supernumerary adjunct of the brain, has no place left for a non-physical God. There is a tendency in many quarters to dodge the troublesome old problem of the

relation of mind to body by reducing them to one; that is, to body. But the trouble with this solution which looks so simple is not merely that it banishes a personal God, but that it banishes human personality as well.

The problem of the nature of mind and its relation to the body is much too complex to be treated adequately in a paragraph, or a volume. Its major implications will be analyzed in Chapter VII. Quite irrespective of religious considerations, the majority of psychologists find it impossible to accept the materialistic conclusions of the view that body is all there is. The "soul," to be sure, is in bad odor with psychologists today; it is too suggestive of a ghostly something, not mind, not body, which nobody can define. But most psychologists hold that there is a non-material reality of some sort—whether it be called mind, consciousness, subject, personality, self or ego —which is the organizing center of our total conscious life. One may still be psychologically respectable if he ventures to believe in the reality of mind, and with it the possibility of an Infinite Mind.

(5) *Is God unreal because non-physical?* This question is bound up with the psychological considerations just referred to. If matter is all there is, there is no God—unless perchance God be a pantheistic summing up of all matter, identical with the physical world in its totality. A good many, converted to a materialistic

outlook by metaphysical behaviorism [7] or some other form of philosophical naturalism—converted perhaps more often by the naïve naturalism that tempts most of us at times to identify the real with the material—frankly surrender belief in God. But the religious impulse will not readily be stifled, and many others try to preserve some of the forms and feeling of religion by resort to pantheism. The merits of such a substitute for a personal God will be considered later.[8]

If matter be all, not much of a God is left. But if human minds are a genuine reality, then matter is not all. The existence of human mind as a non-material, non-spatial reality does not prove that God exists; but it renders at least tenable the possibility of a non-material, non-spatial Supreme Mind. True, we cannot attribute to God a cosmic nervous system. But this is no insuperable obstacle if, as idealistic philosophies hold, mind is the true reality which uses matter as its instrument and medium of expression. *I* am not my flesh and blood and nervous tissue; the real *I* is the self that thinks, and plans, and hopes, and loves, and I use my nervous system as the instrument of my thought. Perhaps the whole world of nature and of human experience is the body, or at least the medium of ex-

[7] Metaphysical behaviorism should be clearly distinguished from methodological behaviorism. The latter simply uses the method of observation of behavior as a means of securing scientific data, and is a valuable technique. The former has the materialistic implications described above.

[8] Chapter VIII.

pression, by which God communicates his thought to man.

Philosophical idealism has many forms, and the arguments for it are too complex to be adequately stated here. All forms agree, however, that the universe is to be understood in terms of *idea,* or mind, or meaning, rather than in terms of material substance. It points out that the apparent self-sufficiency of nature is illusory, and that the physical universe itself must be regarded as a manifestation of Mind. The world seems to be "put together mind-wise." "The system of things is active like a mind; changes, like a mind; is coherent and rational like a mind; and within limits mind can use it. . . . It has been the view of many philosophies and most religions that the world of visible things is the expression to our mind of the activity of a Supreme Mind, so that nature is, as Berkeley says, a divine language." [9] If this view be adopted, the question of a non-physical God need no longer raise a barrier to belief.

(6) *Can we worship God in a world of pain?* Rather paradoxically, that aspect of human life which has done most to bring men to God has also done most to banish religious faith. When disaster befalls, some turn to God as their chief support and emerge undaunted; others turn away in bitterness and the cynicism of despair. And even he whose faith is strongest is often sorely beset with doubts when

[9] Brightman, *An Introduction to Philosophy,* p. 122.

thwarted hopes, or racking physical pain, or the death of those that are loved, raises again the age-old question.

The problem is of such moment, both for speculation and for life, that an entire chapter will later be devoted to it. To summarize briefly the main considerations bearing on it, the problem centers about three types of suffering: that which is caused by the victim's own carelessness or misdeeds; that which is obviously the fault of other human beings; that which is caused by the forces of nature.

The first type raises no difficulty. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." So deeply ingrained in human nature is the feeling that punishment should be meted out according to desert that for centuries the idea has persisted that all suffering must be due to some sin, overt or hidden, of the sufferer. This idea, advanced by the friends of Job and by a great many of "Job's comforters" since, is not only fallacious but cruel. Some suffering—a good deal of it—is Nature's way of teaching us to obey her laws. But not all.

There is much more of problem in the second type. A great deal of suffering is the result of other people's sin and ignorance, carelessness and laziness. In such cases it is scarcely fair to lay the blame on God, though we may legitimately ask why he should make a world in which such a state of affairs is possible.

The answer lies in the very nature of the social

world in which we live. We live in a Great Society, an interwoven network of human relations binding humanity together and enabling us to share richly in the mutual benefits of life. This participation in life's gains must carry with it the necessity of sharing in its losses. We could scarcely hope to share the joys of others without sometimes sharing their sorrows. The shortcomings, like the services, of every life must inevitably have their effect on other lives. The family relation, with its mingling of mutual responsibilities, delights and sorrows, is typical in a measure of the vast group which makes up the Great Society. No man lives to himself alone—he could not if he would—and no sane person would choose to if he could.

The fact of suffering, where man-caused and eradicable, is a challenge to such mutual service that the assets of our social solidarity will exceed the liabilities. The world must be made more of a brotherhood—less of a battleground. In such an interrelatedness there can be no conflict with the idea of a good and loving God.

The real crux of the problem lies in the suffering of the third type which can be ascribed to no human agency—the turmoil and disaster from earthquake and tornado, from fire and flood, from accident and pestilence. The religiously-minded often take refuge in the idea that "Nature" or "Fate" has brought these calamities to pass, and think thus to protect the reputation of the Almighty. But if he is really the Al-

mighty—the all-powerful Determiner of Destiny—the problem cannot thus be dodged.

Such disasters can best be understood as the outcome of the operation of natural laws—not the laws of a blind indifferent nature but God's laws, God's orderly ways of working in his universe. It requires but a little scrutiny to see that these laws—despite the suffering that ofttimes ensues in their operation—are immeasurably beneficial to humanity in the large. An erratic, haphazard world in which no natural phenomenon could be calculated would be a world of infinitely greater suffering than the one we have.

The price we pay for living in an orderly, law-abiding world is the possibility that suffering may sometimes be our lot. Suffering can always be transcended; much of it can be eliminated. The better we understand the laws that govern the world of nature, the less of suffering will ensue; and it is our business to understand and use these laws for human good. A law-abiding world which man can bring increasingly into the service of the common good affords no conflict with the idea of a good and loving God.

The mystery of pain has never been wholly solved. No human person can answer fully the perennial "Why?" There is much that is inscrutable in the ways of "the destiny that shapes our ends." But the confidence that there *is* such a destiny offers a greater personal solace in trouble, and offers, too, a clearer intellectual grasp of the universe, than the alternate

view that human life is the plaything of a vast indifferent machine.

We have surveyed the objections to theistic faith, and have found that all the arguments are answerable. Though unproved, the belief in God is a reasonable hypothesis. We shall proceed now to the positive considerations which favor that belief.

CHAPTER VI

IS THERE A GOD?—EVIDENCES FOR BELIEF

It is not an easy matter to catalogue or tabulate the reasons for belief in God. Most of us believe—if we believe—on other than intellectual grounds. We believe because of a home environment permeated with faith, or because of the touch of some strong religious personality, or because of some gripping personal experience. The majority of people get their religious views, like their politics, from the "atmosphere"—from home influences and early training, from the acts and chance remarks of associates, from incidental references in what is read or seen or heard; in short, from the multitude of factors that make up the cultural environment. Rare indeed is the person who can tell *why* he is Republican, or a Protestant, or a Presbyterian, or why he believes in God.

It is sometimes urged that convictions so casually and illogically acquired are presumably untrue. The opposite is also urged—that anything a person is as sure of as his religious loyalties cannot be false. Neither argument gets anywhere. The fact that religious beliefs are usually socially acquired and uncritically accepted does not prove anything at all about their truth—any more than the same fact about politi-

cal opinions proves whether or not the economic policy of the Republican party is sound. These inherited beliefs may be true; they may not. Presumably they are a mixture of truth and untruth. Psychological factors give warmth to these inherited convictions; logical considerations alone can furnish light.

Religious faith is seldom intellectually generated. Yet it is often intellectually destroyed. The theist who *thinks* must be able to give a reason for the faith that is in him if he would preserve that faith; and he must be able to defend it with reasons if he would convince others that it is worth preserving. If his religion means anything to him, he ought not to be afraid to let it face the guns. If it means nothing to him, intellectual honesty requires that he at least look open-mindedly into an experience that has meant so much in the history of humanity. Intellectual battles, from whichever camp, must be fought with intellectual ammunition.

The evidences for the existence of a God are so interlaced, and so largely dependent on one's whole philosophical outlook, that it is difficult to classify them satisfactorily. Any classification that can be made is bound to be more or less arbitrary. Following the example of the preceding chapter we shall try to group the main considerations under six heads.

The considerations which in the author's judgment afford the most valid grounds for belief in God are as follows: (1) the unity and interacting harmony of the physical universe; (2) the existence of human person-

ality; (3) the rationality and "mind-like" nature of the world; (4) the evidences of a guiding purpose; (5) the religious experience of humanity; (6) the nature of values.

1. *The cause of the cosmos.*

"The heavens declare the glory of God."

Of the factors which support belief, the one which presents itself most readily is the need of a cause, or creator of the world. "Who made the world?" is a child's question; it is also a philosopher's question. In the childhood of the race, the Hebrew seers answered it with the majestic declaration, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." And no philosopher or scientist has ever given a better answer to the question. Whatever their mistakes in geology or biology (for theirs was not a scientific age) the Hebrew seers had a true religious insight.

Other answers of course are possible, though not many. One may say that the world made itself. Or that it never had a cause. Or that the question is unanswerable.

Of the three alternative answers, none is satisfactory. To say that the world made itself simply raises the further question, "How?" How could blind mechanical forces muster intelligence enough to get themselves into the marvelously intricate balance in which we find them? A naturalistic explanation in terms of matter,

or physical energy, or natural law sidesteps the question, for it merely says that these things *are* and tells us nothing of how they came to be.

To say that the world never had a cause is somewhat more credible. It is quite conceivable that the constituent elements of the physical universe have always existed in some form, though our earth must have had a beginning in time. Perhaps creation is eternal rather than temporal, a never-beginning and never-ending process. But even so, there is creation—and creation implies a creator.

To say that the question is unanswerable answers nothing. It simply relieves our minds of the obligation to look for an answer. There is need of caution in affirming that it is fully answerable, but this does not mean that *no* answer can be found. The agnostic attitude is often merely a salve to soothe the conscience of the weary thinker. Then the question emerges again as soon as the salve rubs off.

So we are led back to the reply, "God made the world." This is simply another way of saying that there is a spiritual principle at the heart of things; that the vast system of energy which makes up the world is spiritual energy. It means no diminution of our scientific faith in a world of law; it means that the laws of nature are the laws of God. And if a child's question again be raised, "Who made God?" the answer lies in the very nature of this Ultimate Spiritual Power. It is fruitless to seek for limits or starting-points be-

yond infinity; nothing can be more ultimate than The Ultimate.

Speculative wisdom has added little to that ringing declaration of faith in the supremacy of the spiritual which is found in Genesis 1: 1. But it is not enough to talk about God as a First Cause in the temporal order of events. To push the creative work of God back into the fringes of time and leave it there gets us into many difficulties. Deism, a theory widely held two centuries ago and still the uncritical view of many, assumes that the world was created by God in the beginning—set running, like a watch or mechanical toy —and then left to run by itself. Such a view gives us a First Cause but also gives us an "absentee" God, a God unconcerned with human values or with the present processes of nature. Religion needs an ever-present, ever-working, ever-creative God. Philosophy likewise asks what power it is that keeps the solar system and the electron each whirling in its orbit, and finds an answer in an ever-active God. We shall be wiser if, instead of talking of first causes, we regard God as the ultimate, underlying, ever-present cause of the world, its eternal source and ground. God is forever *immanent* in his world.

. . . .

The argument we have just been stating is a revised form of that which has been known historically as the cosmological—the argument from the need of a deity

as creator of the cosmos. It would be presumptuous to claim that it *proves* there is a God. But science, far from destroying the grounds of religious faith, gives constantly new evidence that this is a marvelously intricate world, a vast harmoniously interacting cosmos. The more we learn about the world we live in, the more incredible its existence appears unless there is an Infinite Mind as the source and ruling guardian of it all. The cosmological argument is thus reinforced by the argument from interaction. "How is a unitary system of interacting members possible? This is the problem. Only through a unitary being which posits and maintains them in their mutual relations. This is the solution." [1]

Let us take a little excursion into the land of starlight. Reviewing our elementary physics, we remember that light travels at the rate of 186,000 miles a second. Our sun, only 93,000,000 miles away, gets its light to us in a little over eight minutes. Scattered through the heavens are other suns—stars, we call them—so many billions upon quadrillions of miles away that ciphers fail us and we measure their distance in terms of the years that have elapsed since their light rays started their long journey to our earth. The star nearest to us, other than our sun, is four and a half "light-years" away. Others are four thousand light-

[1] Borden P. Bowne, *Theism*, p. 53. Professor Bowne (1847-1910) was the principal founder of the American personalistic school of thought, which makes personality the primary reality. The argument from interaction forms the most distinctive feature of the philosophy of Lotze, under whom Bowne studied.

years distant, and the rays that are reaching us only now started their journey centuries before we were born, centuries before the time of Jesus, or David, or Moses, back in the era when the patriarchal story tells us Abraham was tending his flocks in Ur of the Chaldees. A long journey that! But four thousand light-years is a trifle in the vast bigness of things, for stars have been discovered that astronomers believe to be a million light-years away.

Each of these heavenly bodies is whirling in its orbit, never deviating from its wonted path. Our earth (and we along with it) revolves about the sun at the rate of eighteen miles per second—a million and a half miles per day! Our sun is also hurrying along its own way. Our whole galaxy, the Milky Way, is afloat on some rushing stream of space, and all these movements transport us a good million miles every hour. We have traveled a long journey since this time yesterday! Yet so smoothly are we carried that we feel not the slightest apprehension in our dizzy rush through space.

Turning our gaze in the opposite direction, we find in the vast littleness of things a staggering set of figures. Every bit of so-called "matter" is made up of molecules, and these of atoms, and the atoms in turn of protons and electrons which are simply positive and negative charges of electricity in certain numerical combinations. Nobody ever *saw* a molecule, much less

an atom or electron. The molecules in a drop of water, if each were magnified to the size of a grain of sand, would furnish enough to cover the entire United States with a sand-bank fifty feet deep. The diameter of a proton in the positive nucleus of an atom is about 1/400,000,000 of an inch. The mass of an electron, the negative charge, is estimated to be about 1/1800 that of the proton. In fact, these may be merely fields of force, without any dimensions at all. Whatever an electron is, it is flying around in its own little solar system at tremendous speed—about 10,000 miles per second, and is doing all this traveling within spherical limits of about 1/100,000,000 of an inch in diameter. No wonder G. K. Chesterton has remarked that one can go mad by figuring things out in square inches!

What does all this mean for religion? It means that our earth is a comparatively insignificant planetary fragment, and this awareness ought to make us humble. It means too that we are living in a world of amazing intricacy and complexity, a world of ordered harmony, a world not only of space and speed but of infinite accuracy. The possibility that such a world "fell together" by chance is so remote that the suggestion is unthinkable. Science gives us new evidence daily that the world is a cosmos, a *uni*verse, an ordered oneness. And whence came this physical universe, with its unity and interacting harmony, save from a Unitary Creative Power? The heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament showeth his handiwork.

2. *Human personality.*

"And God created man in his own image."

It is an indisputable fact that man is here: of this we can be certain in a world of many uncertainties. The next question is, "How did he get here?"

Biologically, man's ancestry can be traced back to sub-human stages, back indeed to the one-celled amœba, and then (presumably) across the border-line of organic and inorganic to Mother Earth. The Genesis view is not far removed from that of modern science when it says, "And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the earth."

Through millions of years, so science tells us, man has been a-making. And what guided the process through all those æons? Is man merely a happy accident? (Or a mistake, as the cynic would say?) Is man the result of undirected natural forces, stumbling hither and yon and falling by fortuitous circumstances into the product we call *homo sapiens?* The "survival of the fittest" is explanatory of many of man's traits; but, as has been aptly remarked, what accounts for the "arrival of the fit?" A distinguished biologist, Professor Lawrence Henderson, has shown persuasively that before the emergence of life upon the planet the inorganic world was ready for it, with exactly the right combination of chemical elements to support life.[2] This does not look like chance. Then onward through

[2] See Henderson, *The Fitness of the Environment.*

the ages favorable variations emerged, and were preserved, and an organism of increasing complexity developed. And at last, the organism was no longer an organism only; it was a living soul. To say that man is merely a "fortuitous concourse of atoms" is to offer an affront to common sense and to biological science.

It was once the fashion for theology to belittle man, thinking to glorify God by making of man a "worm of the dust." This concept has well-nigh vanished from theology, and the dignity and greatness of man gets its attacks from other quarters—from the astronomer who points to man's littleness in the vast immensities of space, from the psychologist who makes of man an animal and nothing but an animal, from the materialist who finds in man only a combination of physico-chemical elements. Anatole France calls man "a speck of dust on a ball of mud." Bertrand Russell speaks of "this petty planet on which our bodies impotently crawl." H. L. Mencken remarks that man is a sick fly taking a dizzy ride on a gigantic fly-wheel, and life a combat between jackals and jackasses.

From such estimates, it is refreshing to turn to words of another sort:

"Thou hast made him but little lower than God,
And crownest him with glory and honor.
Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands;
Thou hast put all things under his feet."

So sings the Psalmist in a pæan of praise to the Cre-

ator, and to man, the climax of creative acts. This rapturous outburst is good poetry, good religion, and good philosophy.

Man, to be sure, does not always appear to reflect the character of God. Instead of being but little lower than God, he seems in some respects to be but little above the beast. In all of us there are traits which point to a survival from our animal ancestry. Man shares the instincts of animal life—"we cannot disown our poor relations."

Yet in spite of manifold resemblances, the fact remains that in that *ensemble* which we call man's personality, that combination of characteristics which makes each individual what he is, human kind is a long way removed from the animal world. Two capacities in particular set man so far apart from the animal that it is folly to attempt to describe human personality wholly, or even largely, in terms of biological categories drawn from the sub-human realm. These capacities are man's creative intelligence and his power of pursuing moral ideals. No animal has the power to think logically in terms of abstract concepts or to exercise creative genius. No animal has the power to subordinate an instinctive urge to an ideal of moral rectitude, or to strive consciously for the attainment of moral values.[3]

It is, moreover, a significant fact that rationality and goodness, these most distinctive attributes of human personality, are the very qualities which above

[3] Cf. Ch. VII, Sec. 1, for a fuller treatment of the difference.

all others God must possess if there be a God. A God who was not intelligent and rational would be useless as an explanation of the unity and interacting orderliness of the universe. A God who was not good—a God unconcerned with the moral welfare of mankind, would neither satisfy the demands of religious worship nor explain the existence of a purposeful and moral universe. If it be true that man's highest traits are those of God, it looks as if man had been made in the image—the rational and moral image—of the Creator.

Human personality is the product either of blind material forces or of a higher mind. It may be the product of a Mind working through material forces. But its ultimate explanation is either personal or impersonal—we must take our choice. It seems more credible—more consistent with the nature of human personality in its most characteristic traits—to believe with the Hebrew seers that man is the supreme creative act of a Supreme Person.

3. *A mind-like world.*

"He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?"

A third line of evidence comes from that department of philosophy called epistemology, or rather from epistemology in conjunction with its physical and metaphysical foundations. Epistemology is the theory of knowledge—the study which examines the possibility of our knowing the world in which we live. It has been facetiously, and not inaccurately, defined as "the

knowledge that gives us the knowledge of *what* knowledge is knowledge."

We are much in the habit of assuming that the ideas in our minds are correct copies of the objects they refer to. For example, we feel sure that when we look at an apple and think we see a red, round, external object we really see one. To raise any question on this point usually strikes the philosophically uninitiated as sheer nonsense. But the problem is not so simple as it looks. If one is color-blind, the apple is no longer red—which raises the question of what would become of the redness of apples if we were all color-blind. Seen in twilight, or through colored glasses, its redness is of a different hue. It ordinarily has a certain apple-taste and apple-odor, but tasted and smelled when one has a cold, it has neither. When it falls to the floor we hear a thud; the question arises (like the old problem of the tree that falls in an ear-less forest) whether there would be a thud if there were no ear to hear it.

Physics deals roughly with our "common sense" assumptions. In fact, it tells us that the redness is not in the apple at all; that a color is simply a set of mathematically calculable vibrations of a certain wave length, impinging upon the sense organs of an observer. It answers the sound problem by denying that there can be a sound without a hearing ear. Likewise taste, and odor, and possibly some other qualities. The solidity of the apple, which looks more substantial, vanishes too in an analysis of its minute electrons into

charges of electrical energy. And the apple turns out upon investigation to be not the solid, external, independent thing it looks to be—but a system of activity, infinitely complex, deriving the qualities we attribute to it from a certain set of vibrations in conjunction with a certain set of sense organs.

One theory of epistemology holds that idea and object are one and inseparable (i.e., that the apple *is* the experience of it in the mind of an observer); another view maintains that every idea *refers to* an object which is other than itself. We shall not attempt to settle here this abstruse question, which has given Bishop Berkeley, John Locke, Immanuel Kant and innumerable others much cause for speculation. All we are concerned with here is the religious significance of the problem. It is enough to note that there is a problem, and a puzzling one. The question of how our minds can know the world around us *looks* simple—so does the rising of the sun in the east each morning. But when one probes behind either event it is far from simple, and the solution far from being what appears on the surface. We know the outer world, but *how?* As in the case of our noiseless, almost unthinkably rapid rush through space, the very ease with which we do it blinds us to the mystery and miracle of the process.

Not all philosophies have thought it necessary to introduce God as an aid in the solution of the epistemological puzzle, but many have. Most famous of

these is Berkeley's doctrine that physical objects owe all the externality they have to their being ideas in the mind of God. The various types of absolute idealism that have emanated from Hegel agree in regarding the universe as a unitary system of thought, and accept the Hegelian dictum, "What is real is rational." All of these have an Absolute as the ground of things; some have an Absolute Self, or an all-knowing Mind, spanning the chasm between the finite knower and the object of his knowledge. A modern outgrowth of this school is found in Professor Hocking's view that our experience of nature is always shared experience, some of it shared with other minds, all of it shared with Other Mind.[4] It was a major tenet of Professor Bowne's philosophy that the "parallelism of thought and thing" sets a gap between idea and object which can be bridged only by a metaphysical monism based on the activity of an Infinite Mind.[5]

Epistemology drives us back to metaphysics, for our minds can know the world around us only because the world itself responds to our knowing. Suppose we assume for a moment that no mind ever had anything to do with its making, and that it just fell together by accident. A comparable analogy would be a page of type that fell together as printer's pi. Would we expect to read any meaning from the page? Scarcely.

[4] See W. E. Hocking, *The Meaning of God in Human Experience,* Chs. XVII-XXI.

[5] Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge,* Pt. II, Ch. II.

The chance that the type would fall together to make one intelligible word is slight; the chance that the words would arrange themselves in an intelligible sentence infinitely less; the chance that sentences would arrange themselves in a meaningful paragraph or page so remote as to be negligible. Whenever we open a book and find meaning on a page, we assume that a mind has put it there. Likewise when we look at the world and find meaning in it—a world infinitely more intricate and full of meaning than any page of type—we can only assume that a Mind has placed it there.[6]

Not only can man read off the secrets of nature; man can control nature. Neither would be possible, were not the universe an orderly, intelligible, dependable world. The magnificent achievements of modern science are a double tribute to the greatness of man's mind and to the mind-like nature of the world that man is mastering. Electric currents know naught of mathematics, but electric currents travel as if they knew mathematics. Sound vibrations were in the air for centuries before human genius caught them with the radio, but human genius never could have caught them had they not been part of a mind-like universe. It is not by accident that man finds his environment responding to his touch.

To say that the intelligibility of the universe arose through mere chance or the undirected interplay of

[6] This analogy is borrowed from Fosdick, *The Assurance of Immortality*, p. 83.

material forces is simply to confess our inability or unwillingness to grapple with the problem. There appears to be, to use the phrase of Leibniz, a sort of "preëstablished harmony" between the universe and human minds.[7] The possibility of our knowing the world around us, of discovering meaning in it and bending it to human purposes, points to a Supreme Mind as the author both of human minds and the world of things.

4. *Teleology versus mechanism.*

"Yet I doubt not thro' the ages
One increasing purpose runs."

A fourth argument, usually called the teleological, affirms the belief in God from the evidences of purpose in the universe. It has as its correlate the atheistic argument from the presence of evil and the apparent indifference of the world of nature. The evidence is by no means all on one side, and the question as to whether the world is really guided by a world purpose or is merely a great purposeless machine is one of the deepest that confronts human thinking. Philosophers are divided on this issue into teleologists and mechanists.

Teleology is the view that the universe is purposeful —that it realizes ends and is concerned with the attainment of values. It says that the universe is not a mere

[7] The term is not used here in the same sense in which Leibniz used it. He denied interaction among the "monads," or elements of the universe.

aggregation of parts each having its own little function, but that the universe is a *whole,* or an organism, made of parts which work together in a unity and work toward some end. It boldly denies the mathematical dictum that the whole is equal to the sum of all its parts; for it says that the whole is *greater* than the sum of its parts. Even so mechanical a thing as a steam-engine, for example, is more than the sum of the pieces of steel that make it up; it is a unitary structure put together with its parts in certain relations to attain a certain purpose. The teleologist grants that the universe in some respects is like a steam-engine. But instead of being, in the words of Herr Teufelsdroeckh, "one huge, dead, immeasurable Steam-engine, rolling on, in its dead indifference, to grind me limb from limb," teleology asserts that it was made for a purpose and is going somewhere.

Mechanism, on the other hand, maintains that the world is governed by unchanging natural laws which act automatically and with such precision that every event—whether of man or nature—could be predicted with unvarying accuracy if all the circumstances were known. It thus links itself with determinism in the field of human conduct—an aspect of the problem which will receive fuller consideration in a later chapter. It holds that every event is inevitably determined by the chain of previous circumstance, and bids us study these sequences instead of looking for purposes if we would understand the why of things. Mechanism

rests its case on the push of the past: teleology on the pull of the future.

Mechanism is often misunderstood. As a scientific method, it is simply an application of the accepted principle that every effect must have a cause. The study of antecedent circumstances and the establishment of causal sequences is imperative to any scientific view of things, and has done much to banish superstition. But when a legitimate scientific method exalts itself into a metaphysics and tries to banish the spiritual aspects of man's nature by denying their existence—to say nothing of its banishment of a divine purpose—it exceeds it rightful bounds. "To tell men that they are accidental collocations of physical atoms; that what they think is spirit in them is as much a chemico-mechanical product as phosphorescence on the sea and essentially as transient; that they are the passive results of heredity and environment, and by them are as mechanically determined as is a locomotive by its steam-pressure and its rails; that they have no spiritual source, no abiding spiritual meaning, no spiritual destiny, and no control over their own character and development—that is sheer irreligion and not only cannot solve the problem . . . but if it were logical (as fortunately it seldom is) it would not even try." [8]

Mechanism used to be accepted as an indisputable principle in the realm of the purely physical. But no

[8] Fosdick, *Adventurous Religion*, p. 27.

longer. The solid foundations of the older physics are breaking up with recent discoveries, such as the quantum theory and the principle of relativity; and Professor A. N. Whitehead, probably the most authoritative philosopher-physicist of the present day, has shown in his *Science and the Modern World* that a mechanistic philosophy is inadequate to account for all phenomena even in the world of physical nature. "The old foundations of scientific thought are becoming unintelligible. Time, space, matter, material, ether, electricity, mechanism, organism, configuration, structure, pattern, function, all require reinterpretation. What is the sense of talking about a mechanical interpretation when you do not know what you mean by mechanics?" [9]

Biological evolution, in the first flush of its popularity, was generally interpreted in mechanistic terms. "Natural selection" and "survival of the fittest" were thought to cover the whole territory. But not for long. Biologists have for many years been divided on the question as to whether all biological phenomena can be interpreted mechanistically. There are many "vitalists" who hold to the existence of a non-mechanical life force.[10] Vitalism is not necessarily teleological in

[9] *Op. cit.*, p. 24. Cf. also A. S. Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World*, p. 294, "It is a consequence of the advent of the quantum theory that *physics is no longer pledged to a scheme of deterministic law.*"

[10] The leading exponent of this view, Hans Driesch, has given this life force the name of *entelechy*, a term borrowed from Aristotle and meaning literally "having a purpose within." Bergson calls it the *Élan Vital*.

the sense of asserting a divine purpose, and an impersonal Life Force is a long way from the God of religion; [11] yet it joins hands with religion in denying staunchly that "creation walks with aimless feet."

Let us look at a few of the teleological factors discernible in evolution. One of these is found in the very meaning of evolution. Evolution implies progress. And progress is not mere change; it is movement *toward* something. To quote Professor Whitehead again, "The aboriginal stuff, or material, from which a materialistic philosophy starts, is incapable of evolution. . . . Evolution, on the materialistic theory, is reduced to the rôle of being merely another word for the description of the changes of the external relations between portions of matter. There is nothing to evolve, because one set of external relations is as good as any other set of external relations. There can merely be change, purposeless and unprogressive." [12] Yet progress is a fact. To talk of progress without guide or goal is to destroy its meaning.

We have noted the problem that mechanism faces (if it faces it) about the "arrival of the fit." Biologists confess that the origin, both of the primordial germ cell and the myriad variations from which new species have emerged, is shrouded in mystery. To attribute these emergents to chance is disloyalty to mechanistic method, for mechanism has no place for

[11] Cf. Ch. VIII, Sec. 3.
[12] *Science and the Modern World*, p. 157.

deviations from the established order. To attribute them to a directing cosmic purpose is to surrender the case to teleology. Mechanism is thus driven to deny all novelty, maintaining that everything apparently new has been potentially present from all eternity. But this simply multiplies mysteries, and does not tell us at all how it came to be present, or how it came to "unroll" as it has. The more tenable doctrine of "emergent evolution," which holds that at each new level something new emerges, easily correlates with theistic faith in a guiding purpose.

Looking at the biological organism itself, we find many characteristics which are non-mechanical. The distinguished scientist-philosopher J. Y. Simpson, in his *Spiritual Interpretation of Nature,* points out that its powers of self-nutrition, self-repair, self-reproduction, and self-direction are traits unexplainable in terms of physical and chemical forces. Professor J. Arthur Thomson says, "If the organism is an engine, it is a self-stoking, self-repairing, self-preservative, self-adjusting, self-increasing, self-reproducing engine." [13] The man who could invent an automobile that could feed, repair and reproduce itself would make his fortune overnight!

The struggle for existence itself implies a purposive factor in the organism. Machines do not struggle. There is much in the struggle of a living organism

[13] *The Bible of Nature,* p. 100. Quoted by Wright in *A Student's Philosophy of Religion,* p. 319.

that is mechanical; yet even in the subhuman realm, in such elemental urges as hunger, sex, and self-protection, there is a selective element in which consciousness plays a part. The horse, within limits, can choose its food; the automobile is yet to be invented that can choose its oil and gasoline! The presence of consciousness in the higher animals has had no little influence in the preservation of the organisms possessing superior intelligence and adaptability.

When man emerged, consciousness came to function in a vastly more important way; for in *homo sapiens* the course of "natural" selection was definitely interrupted by his power to act in accordance with rationally chosen ends. No longer does Nature take its course, for we are *human,* humane, humanitarian—preserving weaklings biologically "unfit" to survive. We do this because social evolution has superseded biological, and man is attempting—however feebly—to guide his destiny and that of his fellows on the basis of the supremacy of the good rather than the survival of the strong. In human evolution "fitness" takes on a new and finer meaning.

If mechanistic categories are inadequate to explain all the data of the physical and biological sciences, they prove still more inadequate in the social sciences. There are undoubtedly many mechanistic elements in human thought and conduct,[14] the discovery of which will furnish valuable tools for the direction of human

[14] *Infra,* Ch. X, Sec. 3.

action along better channels. But the ideal of the better, and the power to choose it, still stand as evidences of the purposeful. Many of man's acts are thrust on him from behind, and every act has a cause. But in his most significant acts he is lured from before, led on by ideals and consciously chosen ends. "The gleaming ideal is the everlasting real." To deny that man is capable of purposeful activity is to blind one's eyes to the facts for the sake of defending a theory.

. . . .

But the reader may be growing impatient. The question we are working on, he reminds us, is the belief in God. What has the presence of non-mechanical factors in the realm of physical nature, and biological organisms, and human choice, to do with God?

It has at least this to do with God: that the rejection of mechanism in these realms, for reasons scientific rather than religious, gives evidence that any theory of universal mechanism oversteps its bounds. It thus clears the ground for faith in a purposive, guiding God —a God of long purposes who works out his will through these mechanisms that we call natural laws, a God who *uses* law but is not the victim of it.

We can go further, and say that there are value elements—evidences of increasing worth in the onward march of things—to be discerned in both biological and social evolution. It is a long journey from amœba to *homo sapiens,* but it is a journey that has been going

somewhere. The emergence of an organism with the complexity and skill of the human body, to say nothing of the vastly greater complexity and skill of the human mind, is a sheer mystery in a mechanistic world.

It is of course impossible to see value or meaning in every step of the biological march. There are unfavorable as well as favorable variations; there is destruction as well as growth. One can gather data, if he will, to prove that Nature is "red in tooth and claw." But the surprising fact is that so many of the variations are favorable, so much of the destruction a stairway for progress. In a world of fang and claw, of bacillus and parasite, the natural conclusion would be—not progress—but universal death. But instead, there is life, and growth, and increasing complexity of structure and function. There is ugliness in the world, but much more of beauty also than is necessary for biological survival. There is pain, but life in most (perhaps all) of its stages shows a predominance of comfort over pain. Were it otherwise, the will to live would long since have atrophied. There is much that appears purposeless, but lacking the vista of eternity it is presumptuous to brand any phenomenon as purposeless. Looking broadly over the present, and looking backward with a long look, the life-current seems not ill-adapted for the pursuit of the higher values. It looks as if a value-loving Mind were immanent in the process.

Surveying the course of social evolution, we find fur-

ther evidence of a "destiny that shapes our ends." Little by little, man has moved forward in the direction of the supremacy of the spiritual over the carnal. In spite of temporary eddies in human progress, such as the World War and its after-effects, a long look over the past reveals a tremendous advance from the ideals and standards of former days. We are far removed from cannibalism and gladiatorial combats. Human slavery, even within a century, has been well-nigh banished from the earth. Within a decade, we have moved an amazing distance toward a warless world. In spite of the tendency of human nature to sigh for "the good old days," not many of us would be willing, if we could, to go back to the customs and conditions of the past.

Viewed from the perspective of the centuries it looks as if the world were not only moving forward, but moving in the direction of the attainment of higher moral values. How much of the upward progress of mankind is to be attributed to human agencies and how much to divine guidance is a question not to be empirically answered; for God works through human circumstance and human wills. But when human purposing and the force of circumstance have been fully taken into account, we have not accounted adequately for the correlation of the whole—for the direction of destiny toward the "far-off divine event." Human purposes are discordant, yet little by little unity has emerged from the chaos of conflicting ends. Men

more than once have builded better than they knew. More than once men have laid down their lives for causes apparently defeated; yet the cause has outlived defeat and right in the end has triumphed. Shakespeare to the contrary, it is not true that the evil that men do lives after them while the good is oft interred with their bones! The evil is soon forgotten, or remembered to be avoided, while the good lives on as a component element in the structure of human progress.

In spite of the problem of evil, serious as it is, it looks as if the world were being guided by a power that makes for righteousness. Law, pain, struggle, even sin, have meaning in a God-directed universe. In an aimless world, neither cosmic nor human purpose has a meaning.

5. *Religious experience.*

"The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want."

A further line of argument rests on the evidence afforded by the fact of religious experience. With this we shall consider also the pragmatic argument from the effects of religious faith, for it is because the worshiping individual has believed that he found God, and through finding him has achieved self-mastery and peace of soul, that worship has maintained its perennial power over the human spirit.

The term "religious experience" is not easy to de-

fine. We shall use it in the sense of worship—a reverent reaching out of the human individual to a more-than-human power, a seeking that in the very act of *seeking* is in some sense also a *finding*. It is an inner commitment of life to the guidance of that which is recognized as Highest and Holiest. To one who has experienced it, it is an indubitable fact—grasped rather through first-hand acquaintance than through accuracy of definition. To one who has never experienced it, it is likely to appear as mere self-deception or self-hypnosis.

The argument from religious experience has both a racial and an individual significance. Throughout all ages, men of every race and of every stage of civilization have sought after God and have believed that they found him. Rituals, cults, creeds, dogmas, churches—the whole intellectual and institutional framework of religion is an outgrowth of this impulse to worship. Hosts of individuals, through the centuries and now, have felt the presence of God in their lives with such immediate certainty that intellectual proof seemed needless. Listen to the Psalmist:

"Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there shall thy hand lead me,
And thy right hand shall hold me."

To one who has thus felt the personal presence of the divine, there can be little doubt concerning the reality of God.

The argument from religious experience must be scrutinized with care. As we saw in examining the criteria of truth, neither the universality of any belief nor the feeling of certainty with which it is held can establish its truth. The coherence test must be our court of last resort. We must proceed therefore to examine the argument from religious experience in the light of its coherence with what we find in the rest of our experience.

Looking into the historical aspect of the question, we find that while the belief in God cannot be said to be universal in the sense that every individual who ever lived has held it, religious experience appears nevertheless to be a characteristic human trait. It is not an instinct, but it is an instinctive tendency, the outgrowth of man's whole instinctive life. No people has yet been discovered that does not give evidence of having some sort of religion, with some sort of belief in a more-than-human power. To quote a familiar phrase, man is "incurably religious." It looks as if man were made to worship; and it seems unlikely that he was made to worship an illusion.

Furthermore, there appears to be a large-scale harmony between man's search for God and the rest of the universe. Religion emerges and is sustained by man's sense of need—a significant truth embodied in

Schleiermacher's famous definition of religion as a "feeling of absolute dependence." Everywhere else in the universe, a deep-rooted sense of need has been met by an external reality corresponding to it. The whole process of evolution gives evidence of the adaptation of the organism, impelled by a need, to an environment which objectively exists. To gratify hunger there is food; to gratify the sex instinct there are mates. Man is not created with a sense of need for human companionship, and then forced to live alone. "To suppose that during countless ages, from the seaweed up to man, the progress of life was achieved through adjustments to external realities, but that then the method was all at once changed and that throughout a vast province of evolution the end was secured through adjustments to external non-realities, is to do sheer violence to logic and to common sense." [15] Unless the universe for once has deviated from its pattern, it looks as if man's age-long search for God must have a God to satisfy it.

The argument from the religious experience of the individual, as of the race, must be considered in conjunction with the rest of life. A personal experience of God—an intense conviction of his indwelling presence—is probably to most believers the strongest practical reason for belief. Taken by itself it proves only that a great many people sincerely believe that a real

[15] John Fiske, *Through Nature to God*, p. 189.

God is really present in their lives. It is conceivable that all may be deluded.

Yet, there are reasons for believing that the consciousness of God's presence which the devout believer feels is more than a great illusion. Chief among these is the fact that such an experience *makes a difference in living,* and makes a difference that harmonizes with the universe instead of running counter to it. Applying the coherence test to pragmatic effects, we find that the belief that a real God can really come into human life is consistent with the moral welfare of the world. If it were all a vast illusion, it is difficult to conceive how it could harmonize so successfully with the development of finer ideals and nobler living. Yet it does so harmonize, and history reveals an ever-increasing harmony. To be sure, superstitious notions and unethical practices have more than once been fostered in the name of religion. But witchcraft and the Inquisition have had their day and ceased to be—and they have ceased to be because they were antagonistic to the major currents of the universe as manifest in human affairs. Little by little, the elements inconsistent with the demands of moral progress perish. The belief that God can enter into human life and lift it to higher planes has persistently survived.

The belief in God has had tremendous consequences. In spite of ghastly perversions, it is the most potent idea that the world has known. The idea of a good God demanding goodness in men, when linked with a

personal experience of the divine, has afforded an unparalleled dynamic to moral living. It has turned men again and again from sin to righteousness, and has enabled them to triumph gloriously over the ills of life. It has brought a richer, fuller life to thousands, and has lifted men from despair to hope through a conquering faith in the Eternal. The belief that there is a good God who wants men to be good and who is aiding them in their moral struggles is a simple doctrine—but it is a doctrine without which the world would be a very different place.

History bears witness to the potency of the idea of God. Not all the great figures of history have been impelled by religious motives. But if the influence of all whose work was motivated primarily by the ideal of obedience to the will of God were to be stricken from the world's history, the story would lose its richest elements. Moses, Isaiah, Socrates, Jesus, Paul, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Lincoln, Gandhi, and hundreds of lesser figures, have learned of God and molded destiny. If we turn to the literature of the ages, the verdict is the same. The world's greatest epics have been religious epics—Homer, Dante and Milton bear witness to the potency of the idea of God. Goethe, Browning, Tennyson and a host of other poets and seers have found in religious faith an inspiration to creativity. The world's greatest literary masterpiece is the Bible, and the influence of the Bible has permeated all other literature. In the field of art, the

greatest themes are religious themes. Phidias and Praxiteles, Raphael and Michael Angelo—each in his own way has portrayed his conception of the reality of the divine.

Religious institutions which rest on the belief in a more-than-human power are corporate elements in the life of every nation. In every land the house of worship—whether temple or mosque, synagogue or church—is looked upon with respect and reverence. Cults and rituals, ministers and priests exert a powerful influence on every people. The social customs connected with marriage and death—the most important events in life—almost everywhere assert at least a formal recognition of dependence upon the divine. If the God-idea is ever proven false and we must set to work to eradicate all that depends upon it, we shall need to do a vast amount of pruning!

Religious experience is built upon belief in a real God. The consequences of the belief do not prove its truth beyond all question. But they indicate that the belief in God makes a difference, and makes the kind of difference that it ought to make in an orderly, purposeful, moral universe. The God-idea seems to coincide with the ways of the universe—not to thwart them. If the world is built on rational principles, it would be strange indeed if the most powerful and the most inspiring idea that humanity has known should turn out to be merely men's imaginings.

6. *The objectivity of values.*

> "On the earth the broken arcs,
> In the heaven a perfect round."

We come now to an argument for God which is of very uneven standing among philosophers. Some regard it as the most cogent of all—so forceful as virtually to constitute a proof. Others deny it any standing whatever. We shall state it and let the reader judge. It is called the argument from the objectivity of values.

By the *value* of anything—whether a dinner, or a sunset, or an experience of worship—we mean its worthfulness or desirability. That is, the amount of satisfaction it brings to the person who values it. It may have economic or monetary value; it may not. The most important values, such as the love of friends and family, a clear conscience and a contented mind, cannot be bought or sold. Everybody values something, and values some things more than others. The values which any person loves and lives for—his dominant desires—are the truest index of his character.

It is important to notice that wherever we find a value, it is a value *for some mind.* We cannot point to any object and say it is worth anything unless it is *worth something to somebody.* There would be no beauty in a sunset unless there were beauty-loving minds to see it. There would be no value in knowledge without minds to know; no value in goodness without

persons to be good. We rob value of its whole meaning if we try to think of values as existing apart from the minds that do the valuing.

Everybody values something, but we do not all value the same things. There are very few things in the world that have not been prized and sought after by somebody; there are very few things (perhaps happiness is the only thing) which everybody wants. I can think of nothing I desire less at this moment than a Pomeranian poodle; yet I must respect the wish of my neighbor who wants a Pomeranian poodle very much. It is a homely bit of wisdom, but a true one, that it takes all kinds of people to make a world.

When we look at the standards of valuation which have been set by society and crystallized into social codes, a similar variability confronts us. In different social environments, people have different ideas of what is "right"—whether of morals or truth or beauty. The æsthetic standards of the South Sea Islanders are not those of New York and Paris. The moral standards of the early Hebrews are not those of the twentieth century. The truth standards of those who take the Bible literally "word for word, from cover to cover" are not the standards of those who attempt to interpret it historically. Nothing is more common than variability in value judgments—whether of individual or society.

Thus far it looks as if values were subjective—special-to-me, or at most, special-to-my-group. If ob-

jectivity means uniformity, obviously we cannot find it by searching among human standards. But is there any sense in which values are objective, common-to-all, outside of me and outside of my group? Let us see.

By the objectivity of values is meant the belief that there are certain types of value which every rational mind *ought* to prize; and that these values depend, not on our subjective preferences and shifting social standards, but on something solid and dependable in the nature of the universe.[16] The objectivity of values implies that there is a real goodness, a real truth, a real beauty which is good or true or beautiful quite regardless of whether you or I may think so. Regardless of whether it is sanctioned by the accepted standards of western civilization in 1929. Regardless of whether it has the blessing of Emily Post, or accords with the rules of my fraternity. It means, for example, that no matter how dishonest I may manage to be without getting put in jail, or being talked about, or even being troubled in my conscience, honesty is still good—and good not merely because it is the best policy but because it is *really* good. It means that, just as seven times seven is forty-nine however poor I may be in arithmetic, or may wish it to be fifty, so there are values in life which every rational individual ought to seek after and recognize to the limit of his powers. And since neither individual opinion nor social codes

[16] Cf. Ch. II, Sec. 2.

yield any true objectivity, these values, if they are genuinely objective, must be grounded in something *more than human.* In a word, grounded in God.

Are values really objective? Could we answer with a decisive yes or no, we should have gone a long way toward solving the problems of both religion and philosophy. Upon this question hinges the issue as to whether we strive merely for ephemeral goods, or for goods that are eternal because grounded in an eternal determiner of destiny.[17] The question cuts across metaphysical systems and divides them into optimistic and pessimistic, into idealistic and naturalistic. The dominant trait of metaphysical naturalism is not its stand on the inner nature of so-called "matter"; it is its negative reply to that deepest of all human queries, "Is the universe friendly?" Naturalistic ethics, says Professor Hocking, is man's gesture of heroism on the scaffold of a universe that will eventually write a cipher as the sum of all his works. "It lacks the vista of eternity, and the resonance of a divine concern in its inward vitality." It is this note which faith in a personal God as the ground and goal of values supplies to men.

The religious spirit has not always been able to formulate the logical foundations of its faith that values are objective, but it has clung tenaciously to the conviction that somehow its highest ideals must be real. It has refused to believe that its aspirations toward the

[17] *Infra.,* pp. 189 f., 215, 242, 309 f.

higher reaches of the soul are but fleeting fancies. Idealistic poetry, the devotional literature of the Bible, the liturgies of the Church—every medium through which religious experience has translated itself into words, gives evidence of a deep conviction that ideals have cosmic meaning because grounded in an All-Perfect. And that, in a word, is what the objectivity of values means.

In daily living too everybody takes some stand upon the question—despite the fact that few have heard the term. Every assertion that "God knows best"; every prayer that the will of God be done on earth as it is in heaven, is a reassertion of faith in the cosmic status of values. When the spirit of man refuses (as it steadfastly does refuse) to believe that the obvious evil facts of the world are its *real* facts—when it sees a meaning beyond its tears, or tear-dimmed hopes for a meaning to be unrolled, then it asserts that values are cosmic and enduring and not to be snuffed out by the fickle winds of circumstance.

* * * *

We said above, "faith" in the cosmic status of values. Is it only faith? In practical experience the conviction we have described rests far more upon faith than logic, and arises mainly out of man's religious experience. Yet there are some intellectual foundations for this faith, and these must be briefly stated.

Looking back over the arguments for God already

discussed, we recall that the first three made little reference to his nature, other than that the source of the universe must be characterized by intelligence and power. Then we saw reason for believing that this is a moral universe that cares for the welfare of human folk, a universe led along in its onward upward path by an intelligent moral purpose. And we saw that God can come into human life and transform it by an ever-repeated moral miracle, and that the belief in God is the most potent idea for the attainment of moral growth that the world has known. The considerations already presented in connection with the arguments from teleology and religious experience support the view that values are objective.

We can carry the argument still further if we rely upon coherence as the final test of truth. We believe that there is a physical world around us, not simply because our senses give us evidence (for our senses often deceive), but because our senses give us data which we can usually fit together in our minds to form a coherent picture. W. R. Sorley in his *Moral Values and the Idea of God* suggests that a similar situation holds in the field of our moral judgments. Every individual has within him a sense of *ought*, however perverted; the obligation to duty is inescapable—to be dodged but never banished.[18] Society's advance gives evidence of moral progress in the direction of the supremacy of the spiritual over the carnal and the other-regarding over

[18] This conception is the basis of Kant's doctrine of the categorical imperative, from which he drew his postulate that God must exist as the source of man's moral nature.

the selfish. The facts of man's moral nature give data by which we can posit the existence of an objective moral order—an order not fully known by any human individual but one in which, as in the physical world, we can get an increasing enlargement and correction of the picture as we use the principle of coherence to weed out error and illusion. The *truly good,* as contrasted with that which merely tickles the fancy or *seems* to be good, is that which fits together harmoniously into a comprehensive whole.[19] As we make mistakes in our sense experience but correct them by a wider view, so we make mistakes in our moral experience that must be corrected by a broader and more close-knit grasp of life. Thereby comes moral progress, and the increasing realization in human life of the objective moral order which has its ground in an all-wise, all-good Mind.[20]

However the case may stand with goodness or beauty, truth at least is a value that must be objective. Otherwise, it would cease to be truth, and would become mere subjective preference or group prejudice. Without logical norms *eternally* valid, *everywhere* valid, we should be forever unable to distinguish truth from error. All that would be left to pose as truth would be opinion—whether of individual or group—and neither the individual or group would have any

[19] For example, love is a real value because it makes for greater harmony in the life of the individual and society; hatred a disvalue (in spite of its temporary emotional satisfaction) because it has the opposite effect.

[20] E. S. Brightman in *Religious Values,* especially Chs. I, II and V, develops this position at length and shows its religious significance.

way of correcting this opinion. Truth for its very existence requires, amid the mêlée of false views and shifting opinions, an *absolute* which is more-than-mere-opinion and more-than-social-agreement.[21]

Any theory which denies to truth any objectivity or absoluteness gets caught in its own meshes. For if all truth is relative—essentially a form of preference—then your belief is as apt to be right as mine. But it also follows that my belief is as apt to be right as yours! And neither view has any claim to being a real description of a real world. The view that truth is relative or subjective, if its premises be accepted, must lose its own claim to solid footing along with every other.

In the field of morals too, if there is any real standard of goodness, it must be based on something more than individual opinion and more than social preference. The very possibility of using the principle of harmony as the criterion of goodness implies something all-comprehensive as the back-ground of our fragmentary judgments, something cosmic that is "changeless in the midst of change." It is not by accident that love is the central principle of the world's greatest religion; for love makes for harmony and the binding of all values into a close-knit whole. And only in a perfect God can dwell perfect love. To worship a God of love is to assert that love, like truth, has cosmic meaning.

[21] *Supra,* Ch. IV, Sec. 2.

The sum of the argument is this. Only persons can be wise or good: values cannot float about the universe as etherial entities residing in no mind. Only a Supreme Person can be all-wise or all-good—the ground and goal of all the values worth striving for. If values are cosmic yet personal, they must be grounded in a personal God.

Nearly a thousand years ago Anselm, philosopher-theologian of the Middle Ages, tried to prove that there must be a real God because the idea of God is the most perfect men can form, and where there is perfection there must likewise be existence. This argument, called the ontological, was easily enough demolished by Anselm's successors; for, as Gaunilo showed, the idea of a perfect island is something very different from the existence of such an island. Yet the argument in one form or another has persisted through the ages. Men have refused to relinquish the faith that the highest and best they can imagine must be true. Men have staked their all, and have died for the conviction, that their ideals are not mere transient fancies but are grounded on an eternal Rock of Ages. Today the ontological argument, transformed to faith in the objective reality of men's highest ideals, is perhaps the strongest of reasons for belief in God. Not as a hard and fast logical proof does it afford indisputable evidence. But as a way of life and a practical attitude toward the deeper problems of existence, it leads men boldly and triumphantly to stake their lives

on the belief that there is a God—a good God who wants men to be good. Faith is reason grown courageous: [22] faith is vision plus valor.[23]

. . . .

We have followed a long trail in our quest for the foundations of theistic belief: let us look back over the path. The universe which our experience gives us points to the belief in a Creative Mind as the source of the cosmos with its ordered harmony. Man's personality points to a Supreme Personality for its explanation. Man's knowing mind discovers a mind-like world responding. Man's religious experience impels him to believe that a real God comes into human life, and acceptance of God's reality affords richer practical consequences both for happiness and moral living than does denial. Finally we have seen that the world as it is, with all its limitations, points to the reality of a world as it ought to be—a world of ideals and values existing in the acts and purposes of a more-than-human Person.

We cannot presume to assert that the belief in God has been proved beyond all cavil. The quest is not finished—the road stretches ahead. But unless the universe is a chaotic complex of inexplicable mysteries, it looks as if there must be a God.

[22] L. P. Jacks, *Religious Perplexities*, p. 19.
[23] H. E. Fosdick, *The Meaning of Faith*, p. 12.

CHAPTER VII

PERSONALITY, HUMAN AND DIVINE

In our earlier chapters we have centered attention on God's existence and have avoided as far as possible the question of what kind of God he is. The very use of the word "he" of course implies a personal God. We have used the term as a concession to common usage; but we must now inquire whether, strictly speaking, God is "he" or "it."

There are many who are willing enough to believe in God if God can be defined as an idea, or as natural law, or as the sum of all there is, but who hesitate considerably at the idea of a God who is a real personality. It sounds "unscientific" to say that God is a Spirit, or a living personal being. God may be an idea, or ideal, in human minds, or God may be the mysterious "something" that holds the universe together. But a personal God, a Father-God—is not this a mere rhetorical symbol or anthropomorphic human notion?

The rejection of a personal God generally starts from the point at which our childhood imagery begins to drop away. A God up in the sky? No, the sky is only air and suns and planets and infinite space. A God sitting on a throne? An elderly, kind-faced gen-

tleman with a long white beard? Alas, our grown-up notions banish throne and beard—and the elderly gentleman goes too.

Then, also, there is a good deal of naïve materialism in all of us. It is easy to assume that *real* things are material things; it is not so easy to think of anything as real which is not anywhere in space and has no physical size or shape. It is only a short jump to the conclusion that a "person" is a human body, and a personal God a myth.

This raises an interesting question. What are we, anyway? We do not get very far in psychology—particularly if the brand we study is behavioristic—before we get to wondering, not merely what God is, but what we are ourselves. We cannot say very much about what God's personality is (if there be any) until we know what human personality is (if there be any). Let us take a look at ourselves.

1. *What is a person?*

Perhaps a person is an animal, and only that. Perhaps a physical organism, and only that. Perhaps a soul, and only that. Perhaps a combination of all. Perhaps none of these. Let us see.

(1) *Is a person an animal?* In the first place, a person is not a mere animal. "Mere" is not intended to discredit the capacities of animals or to belittle the marvelous intricacies of structure and function revealed in a study of animal life. In many respects

man shares the traits of the higher animals. His body is built on the same pattern. With minor differences a man breathes like a dog, eats like a dog, sleeps like a dog, sees and hears like a dog—and has other dog-like traits too numerous to mention. In the field of mental life also there is not the absolute separation that once was thought to prevail. A dog is impelled by a complex group of instincts, but so is man. A dog learns by experience, remembers, forms habits—so does man. With apologies to Shakespeare, we might say, "Hath not a dog eyes? Hath not a dog organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a man is?"

Yet with all these similarities a man is not a dog. In fact, a person objects to being treated "like a dog" for the very reason that he knows he is not a dog! One feels intuitively that there is something about personality which gives man superior intrinsic worth, and sets him apart from the subhuman realm. Jesus voiced an almost universal judgment when he said, "How much then is a man of more value than a sheep!"

What makes the difference? To say that man has a more complex nervous system than the lower animals is the truth, but not the whole truth. A dog or sheep has an infinitely more complex nervous system than a snail, and a snail than an amœba; yet these are animals, and animals only. Man is apparently an ani-

mal, and something more. Not structure, but functions and powers, define the difference between human and subhuman life.

It is obvious that man can become civilized, while animals can only be domesticated. This is typical of an important difference in their powers. "Why did man alone of all the animals become civilized? The reason is not far to seek. . . . All animals gain a certain wisdom with age and experience, but the experience of one ape does not profit another. Learning among animals below man is *individual,* not *coöperative* and *cumulative.* . . . It seems to be pretty well established that the monkey learns by *monkeying,* but that he rarely or never appears to *ape.*" [1]

It is a significant fact that no animal seems to be able to build consciously upon the foundations of the past or to strive consciously for the future. A beaver urged on by instinct makes a dam, and makes it just as his forbears made it—he does not learn from their mistakes and has no thought of building for future generations. This distinction has led Korzybski to call animals "space-binders" and men "time-binders." [2] Animals differ from plants in their power of locomotion, while men are able also (as animals are not) to unite the past and future with the present in a transcendent act of thought—to gather up the experience of the race and project it into the future in the form of purposes and ideals.

[1] James Harvey Robinson, *The Mind in the Making,* pp. 69, 70.
[2] A. Korzybski, *The Manhood of Humanity,* p. 59.

If we ask *why* man is a "time-binder"—why he is able to profit by the experience of the past and project his ideals into the future, we find the answer in the nature of his conscious life. Psychologists are generally agreed that animals have little, if any, capacity for abstract thinking.[3] The trained pony in the circus can be taught to thump with its hoof five times when its master says "Five"; it can never learn mathematics. An eagle may have an "eagle eye"; it can never formulate a scientific law from what it sees. Only man can make fruitful generalizations.

Man has a power over his environment which the animal has not. The process of biological evolution in the subhuman realm consists chiefly in adaptations to environment. The dog must develop a keen sense of smell and hearing if he would protect himself. The eagle must develop sharpness of vision and power of flight, or perish in the struggle for existence. Man must also, in a measure, conform to his environment; but he likewise has the power to *transform* it, to mold it to his purposes, to utilize it for working out his will. Man's sense organs and his bodily power of locomotion are biologically inferior to those of many of the animals. But microscope and telescope, telephone and radio, automobile, aeroplane and submarine give evidence of man's power to control nature and bend it to his will by the sweep of his intelligence. This power

[3] Studies made by Wolfgang Köhler and reported in *The Mentality of Apes,* indicate a higher capacity for conceptual thinking in apes than was formerly supposed. However, the general distinction stands.

to transform the environment instead of wholly conforming to it has brought about such marked changes in the course of evolution that it is impossible to interpret human progress entirely in animal categories.

The "time-binding" capacity of man is suggestive also of the difference between man's ethical life and that of the animal. On the basis of past experience and that of the race a person can formulate moral ideals and act consciously in harmony with these ideals. An animal acts largely, perhaps solely, on the basis of instinctive impulses and what its experience, preserved by memory and habit, has taught it. A cat can be taught by punishment not to catch chickens; it can never be taught that it is *morally wrong* to catch chickens. The ant sets an example of industry to the sluggard; but like the lilies of the field that toil not, it is unable to form an ethical ideal of purposeful activity.

No animal can be said to have a religion, unless the definition of religion be unrecognizably distorted. Certainly no animal below the human realm can be conscious of a Determiner of Destiny or worship a higher power, or seek to put itself in contact with the divine for the enrichment of life. Animals give no evidence of being interested in the whence, or the why, or the whither of life. The spiritual yearnings of mankind, whether linked with the demand for moral living or for inner peace and harmony, are apparently foreign to all subhuman experience.

This may be summed up by saying that a human being is a self-conscious person, while an animal is not. A man can say "I am I," and can ponder upon the meaning of his selfhood, with outreachings toward the past and future, with power of conscious development and reflective thought, with capacity for moral ideals and for spiritual aspirations. It is these capacities which make it impossible to interpret human personality in terms of categories drawn wholly from the subhuman realm. To try to do so is to leave out of account man's most characteristic traits.

(2) *Is a person a physical organism?* A person is not a mere physical organism. He is at least a psychophysical organism, and without the psychic side of his existence he would fare but lamely. The non-physical element is denied by the psychology which reduces all mental life to physical behavior and banishes consciousness by ignoring its existence. Extreme behaviorism, as represented by Professor Watson, holds that all so-called thinking is "sub-laryngeal muttering." The conditioned reflex, i.e., an acquired habitual response of the body to a physical stimulus, takes the place of thought. It likewise replaces memory, imagination, even instinct, and habit reigns supreme.[4]

Behaviorism, as a scientific method, has done good service in stressing the importance of accurate scien-

[4] According to Watson, language habits are conditioned reflexes acquired in childhood, and thought is a language habit centered in the muscles of the throat, chest and larynx. See his *Behaviorism;* also a series of popular articles in *Harper's,* May-July, 1926.

tific observation of human and animal behavior. A great deal can be learned about consciousness by observing how conscious beings act. But when the psychologist turns metaphysician and begins to assert that physical reactions to physical stimuli are all there is of mind, it is time to get suspicious. Looking within my mind, I find thoughts, images, desires, dislikes, ideals, purposes, appreciations, judgments, which are very different in nature from muscular movements in the throat or cellular changes in the brain. Some of these thoughts which I find within will issue in outwardly observable behavior: some will remain forever my own private property or vanish unexpressed. Full many a thought (rather fortunately) is "born to blush unseen." Furthermore (whether fortunately or not) my acts very often belie my thoughts. No technique of the observation of behavior can penetrate unerringly to the inner realms of the mental life. There is a boundary over which mind speaks to behaviorist and Freudian alike, and says, "thou shalt not pass."

Behaviorism rests its case entirely upon observation and denies the evidence afforded by introspection. Such a view can therefore establish its conclusions only by leaving out of account certain matters of importance. Quite literally behaviorism "loses its mind"; for it commonly says that there is no sound reason for distinguishing between mind and brain—hence we may as well cease to talk about the former. Or if the term be too firmly intrenched by long usage to be banished,

it must be interpreted to mean only physiological processes. Psychology thus loses its *psyche*—whether called mind, spirit, soul or self.

An identification of mind and brain looks simple enough at first glance and appeals to the naïve materialism ingrained in human nature. Brain is something tangible; mind is intangible and appears to be shrouded in mystery. It is always easier to believe in the reality of the physical than of the non-physical, and there are plenty of doubting Thomases among us who must see and touch. Furthermore, the brain is manifestly connected with our thinking. A blow on the head, or the impairment of the brain by drugs, brings with it a corresponding impairment or loss of conscious thought. It is only a step to the conclusion that the physical is all there is.

Yet this identification of mind and brain turns out upon closer scrutiny to be not so easy as it looks. In the first place, mind and brain are differently experienced. I experience my mind as certain types of thought—as reasonings, imaginings, feelings, desires, etc. I do not ordinarily experience my own brain at all, though I infer that my headache or my drowsiness is due to an impairment of its functioning. I may go into the laboratory, open up the cranium of a dead victim, and experience a brain in quite a different fashion. It can be seen, handled, weighed, smelled. A brain is a physical substance perceptible to the senses; a mind is a form of conscious experience of which we

get a first-hand awareness through looking within. An experience of being happy, for instance, is undoubtedly accompanied by certain changes in the neurones of the brain, probably also by certain glandular changes which affect the organic condition of the body. But the feeling of being happy, *as I feel it,* is no more to be identified with these changes in neurones or glands than the water one gets from a pump is to be identified with the pump, or the pumping.

A second (and closely related) difference between mind and brain is the fact that the brain is spatial while the mind is not. The brain, with the rest of the nervous system, occupies a certain amount of space which could be measured in inches or centimeters with sufficiently accurate instruments. *The mind occupies no space whatever.* No inch or atom of a person's body is his mind. One's mind is where his thoughts are, and they may be anywhere. The cells through which we do our thinking are located in the cortex of the brain; thought itself is vastly more elusive. As David Hume remarked, "A moral reflection is not to the right nor the left of a passion, nor is a sound or smell circular or of a square figure."

It seems clear enough that mind is not brain. But the case is not settled yet. Materialism takes another turn, and says that while the mind is not the brain itself, it is the powerless result of brain activity or other bodily processes. Being merely the way in which the nervous system works, thought can take only the course

which the physical organism, physically conditioned, lets it take.

This view is more plausible than the preceding, and has enough of truth to make it very attractive to many minds. It is apparent that, so far as our experience goes, we could not think without a nervous system, and there is a very close correlation between the condition of the nervous system and the skill with which we think. As breathing is a function of the lungs, which we call respiration; so thinking (i.e., all mental activity) is a function of the nervous system, and we call it mind.

But if we are going to say that mind is the powerless result of neural action, a mere "epiphenomenon" or by-product of bodily changes, this view is going to lead us to some very startling conclusions. We must be prepared to admit that nobody has any freedom of choice, for he does what mechanical, physical forces make him do. It means too that nobody has any freedom in his thoughts any more than in his acts, for thoughts are but bodily acts. It means that the acts we have been accustomed to ascribe to the poetic genius of a Shakespeare or the inventive genius of an Edison are merely the results of physical reactions to physical stimuli: in short, that Shakespeare wrote Macbeth and Edison invented the incandescent light because they could not help it. It means that consciousness has had no part in directing either biological or social evolution, despite the fact that biology gives evidence of conscious selec-

tion in the higher stages and history seems full of conscious choices. It means that logic ceases to have a function; for, since everybody must think simply as his physical mechanism played upon by external forces makes him think, nobody can be held responsible for the nature of his thought.

And right here comes the rub. If thought is merely the product of mechanical bodily forces, then one thought is as good as any other thought; that is, one has just as good a chance of being true as any other. And no better. If conscious, logical selection has nothing to do with the putting together of ideas—if it is all a determined, mechanical process, then the set of ideas which physical forces have shaken together in my nervous system is just as apt to be right as the set in yours. And yours as mine. And neither is any more apt to be right than so much printer's pi. But not many materialists or determinists are willing to believe that they hold to *their own* ideas on any such basis.[5]

It is the *selective* element in consciousness which enables us to build up the whole structure of ideas which we believe, on logical grounds, to be true. If mind thus has the power to select and reject, it is more than the powerless resultant of physical forces. Lungs exist for breathing: the brain exists that the mind may use it as its instrument. Mind is primary.

[5] J. B. Pratt, *Matter and Spirit*, Ch. I, gives an unusually clear statement of the implications of this view.

The materialist cannot banish mind, for he must *use* his mind to form a theory that would banish it. The behaviorist thinks that there is no thinking—a most peculiar paradox, and in strict consistency he ought no longer to "make up his mind" to anything. The milder materialist who denies to mind any creativity would have a hard time creating his theory without it. Like Emerson's Brahma, mind may always say,

> "They reckon ill who leave me out;
> When me they fly, I am the wings."

A person is more than a physical organism.

(3) *Is a person a soul?* We have seen reasons for believing that a person is not merely an animal, and not merely a body. Is he (or has he) a soul? Traditional theology and popular thought say yes; and some psychologists and philosophers agree. But we had better be cautious. Before we reply with a yes or no, we must find out what this soul is that we are talking about.

From the days of primitive animism, the ordinary conception of the soul has been of a vague, mysterious something—an entity which somehow keeps on existing when consciousness vanishes in sleep or death, a spiritual substance which some of the time possesses consciousness but which is something different from mind or consciousness. The ordinary classification of "body, mind, and soul," reflects the common assumption that the soul is something other than the mind.

The very vagueness of the conception arouses our suspicions. Body, I know, and mind (i.e., my various mental processes) I know. But what is this third something which is neither physical nor mental, this elusive soul which is not a part of my conscious life and yet somehow has consciousness? If it were a physical object occupying space we could find it in the body; but obviously it is not there—nobody has ever found his soul in any hidden corner. If it were a mental activity, or a combination of mental activities, we could find it by looking within; but such a soul would be identical with mind.[6] The traditional soul appears to be "neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring." The more we look for it, the more it eludes us.

Few psychologists, whether idealists or materialists, now venture to assert the reality of this kind of soul. David Hume knocked the foundations from under it in his famous statement, "For my part when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself,* I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception."[7] Without accepting Hume's conclusions in their entirety, most psychologists agree today that the soul, as something other than our conscious life, does not exist.

But does this mean that soul as psychic self, or en-

[6] *Mind* is here used in its broadest sense to include all mental processes, not merely the cognitive.

[7] *Treatise of Human Nature,* Book I, Part IV, Section 6.

during personality, is banished? Not at all. It means only that we must redefine our terms. The self is with us still, and performs every legitimate function of the old-time soul. The self exists, not as a hypothetical something *outside of* mind or consciousness, but as *identical with* mind or consciousness in the broadest sense. Mind must of course be taken to cover more than reasoning or other so-called intellectual processes: it must include the whole psychic side of our existence —emotions, volitions and all else that "goes on" in our minds.

My personality consists then in the totality of my mental processes—my thoughts, feelings, purposes, desires, etc.—not isolated or disconnected but *bound together by an awareness of their belonging together as mine.* I know that I am myself and not another; I know that I am the same person today that I was yesterday. I am aware of being the same person now that I was ten years ago, though every particle of bone and tissue in my body has been changed and a different set of thoughts goes coursing through my mind. In short, I know that I am I and that my experiences are mine—and I conclude that I am a self.

This view regards the self as active—as thinking, feeling, willing, uniting past and future in the experience of the present. Such a self is able to perform all the functions which, as we have seen, set man apart from the subhuman world. The self is able consciously to profit by the past and to project its purposes

into the future; it has the power of abstract thought and self-expression; it is able to form ideals of moral rectitude and experience communion with a Higher Self. Watching carefully our terminology, we are justified in saying, not that a person *has* a soul, but he *is* a soul.

A person is a conscious being—he is neither a material substance nor a spook. Personality, or selfhood, consists in the total complex of experience which we call our conscious life. Self-psychology refuses to regard these experiences as merely the functioning of a physical organism, or as a mysterious something lying outside of consciousness, or as a disconnected agglomerate. It regards the self, or soul, as an abiding unity, changing yet permanent, reasserting its continuity over lapses caused by sleep and perhaps by death. The self is real, not as a material or spiritual substance, but as the whole of our organized, unified conscious experience. My soul is my self. I *am* a soul, and I *have* a body.

2. *Is God a person?*

Throughout this somewhat lengthy consideration of what a human person is, little has been said of God. It is evident that until we know what we mean by human personality, it is impossible to decide whether to ascribe personality to God.

If a person is an animal or a physical organism only, God cannot be such a person. If a person is the em-

bodied (or disembodied) soul of animism or the traditional psychology, the belief in God is a more consistent hypothesis—though it would be difficult to conceive how such a God could be immanent in the world as love and goodness and creative power. But if a human person is an active conscious self, God too may be such a self. As the human soul expresses itself through the body but is not identical with the body, so God may manifest himself through the world without being identical with the world. As the highest reaches of human personality are found in love and goodness, wisdom and creativity, so also the personality of God may manifest these qualities in infinite degree.

There is a wide-spread tendency to damn the belief in a personal God by calling it "anthropomorphic." But just what do we mean by anthropomorphism? If "man form" means bodily form, the objection is justified. It is of course true, as Xenophanes remarked, that the white races would want a white God, the yellow races a yellow God, and the Ethiopians a black one. We must have no "Deutscher Gott." Nor is there reason to suppose that God is a Nordic, Protestant, hundred per cent American. God can no longer be conceived as coming down to earth to walk with men in the garden in the cool of the day. Nor can he be thought of intelligently as a God of human passions wreaking vengeance on his enemies, regretting peevishly his own acts, and enticing men to theft and slaughter. Anthropomorphism of this sort can be ex-

cused in the childhood of the individual or the race; it cannot exist in the concepts of intelligent modern thought.

But is the anthropomorphism of bodily form or human passions the only kind of "man-form"? Obviously not. If human personality is conscious experience manifesting itself at its best in love, goodness, wisdom and creative power, then the assertion that the belief in God is anthropomorphic loses its stigma. In Chapter V we saw that *all* knowledge is in a sense anthropomorphic, for we can know only in the terms that human experience gives us.[8] We must take our choice among anthropomorphisms, choosing what appears most consistent with the evidence.

We must think of God, if at all, in terms of the highest that we know. Life gives us nothing higher than personality. If therefore we ascribe to God the highest personal qualities that experience reveals, and if (as we found in Chapter VI) there are reasons for believing that such a God exists, the anthropomorphic character of the belief affords no argument against its truth.

If we are to believe in a personal God we must think of him in terms of the highest human personality we know. To Christians, God is most readily conceived as revealing his true nature in the personality of Jesus. The Christian revelation is not the only avenue to God, but it is the highest the world has seen. It is as "the

[8] *Supra*, p. 83.

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" that we know God most perfectly. The essence of the doctrine of Jesus' divinity lies in the fact that in his life and teachings we learn what God is like. Fortunately one does not need to be versed in metaphysics to know the Father God to whom Jesus prayed, the Father God whose works he came to do, the Father God whose sustaining care he promised to the burdened hearts of men.

CHAPTER VIII

SUBSTITUTES FOR A PERSONAL GOD

We have seen some reasons for holding that God is personal, and the previous chapter has tried to show that the belief in a divine personality is not untenable when the nature of human personality is understood. But the belief in a personal God has formidable rivals. It would be improper to conclude our study without looking at these a little more sharply.

The types of belief which are replacing the personal God idea in many minds are by no means clear-cut and distinct, but they fall roughly into four groups. None of these is necessarily atheistic or agnostic, though all have tendencies in that direction. The views which admit the existence of some kind of God, but not the personal God of theism,[1] assert variously that God is (1) superpersonal, (2) the sum of human ideals and human goodness, (3) an impersonal Life Force or Cosmic Urge, (4) the totality of the universe. Let us look briefly at each of these.

1. *God as superpersonal.*

The term "superpersonal" is ambiguous. Disgusted with the crude anthropomorphism that gives God hands

[1] Theism is the belief in a personal God who is both in the world and other than the world.

and feet and a throne to sit on—perhaps also a big ledger in which to write down our evil deeds, many feel that it bemeans God to make him personal. Even without giving him a physical human body, to ascribe to him mental qualities akin to those of man seems to pull him too close to the human level. Man is a finite creature, prone to evil and error, and these limitations are so much a part of our nature that it seems impossible to have any kind of personality, even a divine personality, without them. Rather than reject the God idea entirely or belittle God by an impersonal conception, it is proposed to banish anthropomorphism by regarding God as superpersonal, though no one knows what anything superpersonal would be. *Superpersonal* thus comes to mean either non-anthropomorphic or an infinite unknown.

When a superpersonal God is defined simply as one who does not have a human body, or a peevish disposition, or other human short-comings, this is merely another way of asserting that God is a "better and higher than human" deity—a conclusion which any theist would assent to. But when "superpersonal" means a vague, mysterious, ineffable Something—a Something of which we can only say *that* it is and not at all *what* it is, we get into difficulties. For why have any God at all? A God so far beyond human personality that we can know nothing about him (or it), is no God, and anything we can say about him is mere abracadabra. Such a God does not help us intellectually to solve the

riddles of the universe, or religiously to solve the riddles of life. The superpersonal conception is refuted by its very emptiness. There is more of moral and religious value in the God of beard and throne than in an unintelligible "It."

Finite and limited though we humans are, we must conceive our God in terms of the highest that we know, and we know nothing higher than personality. There are ranges of personality beyond our grasp. But to say that God needs anything higher than personality at its highest, the personality of which we catch radiant glimpses in the God-man of Galilee, is groundless. Infinite love betokens infinite personality.

2. *God as human ideal.*

The second conception noted, that which generally passes under the name of humanism, we have already referred to in various connections. Humanism is an intermediate step between theism and atheism, with strong leanings in the direction of the latter. It generally lays a good deal of much-needed stress upon the importance of finding God in the love of man and the betterment of the social order; but it denies that God is anything other than our human ideals and human aspirations after goodness. In short, it believes literally that God *is* love, not (as theism holds) that God is a Being who loves. Humanism is often frankly atheistic, but generally preserves a sense of reverence

for spiritual values, interpreting these values in terms of human welfare.

The humanists are rather hard put to it to find an object of worship, for if there is no God except humanity, there is not much challenge to worship. Auguste Comte, the founder of philosophical positivism and the science of sociology, believed that we must reject both theology and metaphysics and with them their traditional God; yet man must worship something. So he suggested a cult for the worship of Humanity. A good many modern Comtes are trying to worship the God (or more properly, the godliness) that dwells only in human life. Others definitely reject the worship side of religion and try to find a substitute for prayer in the service of the social order.

With the humanist's contention that God reveals himself in man's moral strivings and that we must bring God into human life by increasing the love of man for man, there can be no quarrel. Humanism is often a reaction from an anti-social religious individualism that has sought to cultivate spiritual ecstasies and save souls while social evils like war and economic oppression smelled to heaven, and as such it has done good service. And yet, humanism is not enough.

Humanism fails to be religiously satisfying, not so much from its assertions, as from its denials. One may find God in his own heart. Or losing himself in a great cause, he may find God there. Or loving his

neighbor, he may find God in the face of the most unlovely. But if this is all there is of God, why call it God? He would not be seeking *God* unless he believed that God were something more than his own aspirations, or a worthy cause, or his fellow-men. It is the "something more" that transforms man's moral social conduct into a quest for God.

Human nature has too many frailties to be worshipped. Humanity—even humanity transfigured with a divine reverence for the personality of every human creature—falls far below divinity. And man wants a God worth worshipping if he has any. The God of humanism will not give him a refuge in his time of sorrow, nor the sense that "underneath are the everlasting arms." The God of religion must reveal himself in human life; he must also be more than human life, if he is God.

And as for the substitution of social service for worship and prayer, there is no need of an "either-or." The founder of the Christian faith gave *two* great commandments, and the second is *like unto* the first. There is here no "instead of," no "rather than." A holy love for a Father God, rightly envisaged, is man's strongest incentive to a holy love for a brother man.

Humanism is a stopping-place for many who believe in the moral values of religion but cannot accept its personal God. But it is only a stopping-place, not a terminus. It must pass on to atheism, with a frank

admission that it has a moral impulse but no God to worship; or it must retrace its steps to theism. It cannot long stand halting between two ways.

3. *God as Cosmic Force.*

A third substitute for a personal God is the view which admits that there is *something* running the universe, which we may as well call God, but which denies to God all personality by making him (it) an impersonal cosmic force. Sometimes this is conceived biologically in terms of an *Élan Vital,* a Life Force pushing its way onward and shaping the course of evolution; sometimes physically as Natural Law, or Energy, or a Cosmic Urge.

Such a view is often proposed as being more scientific than the personal conception. But we must watch carefully here, lest we fall into very unscientific assumptions. Natural law, for example, is not a power at all; it is merely the formulation of certain relations observed to hold uniformly among the various elements of the universe. The law of gravitation *does* nothing; it is merely the statement of the orderly way in which the power that holds the universe together does something. And the question of the nature of this power is outside the domain of science. It is just as unscientific (or as non-scientific) to posit a Cosmic Urge as a personal God.

Let us go back to the reasons we found for believing in a God at all. We saw that God is needed to ex-

plain the existence and interacting unity, the rationality, the purpose of the world. Without God, human personality is a blank mystery. Also our God (if there be one) must afford a ground for the religious worship and moral experience of mankind.

Can an impersonal power perform these functions? It is difficult to conceive how. If God is a mechanical force, or the sum of all mechanical forces, there is no explanation of how they came into being or of how they got together in their present orderly harmony. Only a mind, and a unitary mind at that, could give order and intelligible meaning to a unitary world. The creation of human personality by blind impersonal forces is a paradox, and scarcely credible. Only minds can have purposes; only a Supreme Mind a world-embracing purpose. Impersonal forces blundering ahead by accident or chance could shake the world together into a jumble—could produce a chaos. Only Mind can make a cosmos.

Such considerations point to a personal God for an intellectually consistent explanation of the universe. And though the philosopher's God may be, and often has been, other than personal, the intuitions of religion are on the side of theism. When religion talks of God, it means by God a Supreme Power that is good. It means a Supreme Power that has moral preferences, and that can be addressed as "thou." It means a Supreme Power that wants men to be good, and that can enter into human life to help men in their sorrows

and moral struggles. But an impersonal Cosmic Force is unable to fulfil these demands.[2] Only persons can be good; only persons care whether others are good. If God be an impersonal power, the only sort of "goodness" we can ascribe to it is that it may happen in some respects to be pleasing to human fancy. But if God is a personality, we can believe that he is really good, that he wants us to be good, that he is willing to help us if we will let him. Without a God who is interested in human affairs and goodness, there is not much use of having any God at all.

Only a personal God can fulfil the demands of religious worship. Worship implies not only adoration, but trust and confidence. Men have not always explicitly worshipped personal gods, but wherever there has been worship there has been a feeling that in some way the object worshipped would respond—would impart values to the worshipper. When "the heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone," he does so because the wood and stone symbolizes to him a personal power that he believes can help him. No impersonal power, conceived as impersonal, can satisfy

[2] The most successful attempt to meet this difficulty of which the writer knows is the thought of Professor Wieman, to which reference was earlier made, p. 45 n. If I understand his view correctly, he regards personality as a symbol, but not a description, of the nature of God. God is that force or process in the universe which makes for the progressive development of values, and the individual can receive help by putting himself in the right adjustment to it. This view, fruitful though it is, seems to me either to give an inadequate basis to the cosmic concern for values, or else to imply that God in his (its) regard for values is really personal.

the demand of the human heart for such a response. Only a personal God could be interested in human values, and the essence of religion lies in the increase and conservation of the richer values of life.

4. *God as the Whole.*

Pantheism, the oldest of all non-personal conceptions, makes God the totality of all there is. It goes back to the Eleatics who taught, in the early days of Greek thought, that the world is one vast eternal changeless whole, and God the All. Even earlier, pantheism appears in the Brahman philosophy-religions of India. It dominated the metaphysics of the Stoics, and through them laid its impress on early Christian thinking. Branded as unorthodox, yet ever recurring, it made its way on down through the Middle Ages, emerged in poetic grandeur in the martyr Bruno, and received its clearest formulation with a mathematical rigor and vigor in the thought of the great Spinoza. A century ago Hegel found in an all-inclusive pantheistic Absolute the key to the nature of the universe, and in laying a foundation on which all later absolute idealisms have built, laid also a groundwork for much of the religious speculation of the nineteenth century. Pantheism, whether as philosophy or religion, is still a potent force, and has received new reinforcement from the growth of a scientific spirit which seems to many to make the personal God idea untenable.

Pantheism, reduced to simplest terms, is the view

that God is the Whole; i.e., that God is the totality of physical nature and human personality. It agrees with theism in emphasizing the immanence of God. It differs from theism in denying God's transcendence, for theism asserts that God is both immanent and transcendent—that he is *in* the world but also *other than* the world. A small preposition becomes very important at this point, for the pantheist says that God *is* the world, while the theist says that God is *in* the world but not identical with it.

Pantheism has much to commend it. It is more satisfactory than deism—the theory that back in the dim ages God set the world running somewhat as one winds a watch, and then withdrew into a celestial isolation. Pantheism, insofar as it regards the whole world as a vibrant manifestation of God, cultivates an attitude of religious reverence toward everything in life. The arch-pantheist Spinoza was called a "God-intoxicated" man; Wordsworth and Emerson were great religious pantheists. Pantheism avoids conflict with science, for the world which science studies is the same world which constitutes the reality of the divine.

But cannot these advantages be preserved without sacrificing the belief in a God who is a loving Father? Theism believes they can, for it holds that God is an ever-present, ever-living, ever-loving, ever-creative God, ever manifesting himself in his universe but not submerging his identity in the world of men and things. It finds in pantheism certain serious difficulties.

As in the case of the Life Force view, the impersonal nature of the pantheistic conception imposes limitations which make it doubtful whether it really gives us a God at all. We found the evidence for God to rest upon the very existence of the universe, with its mind-like nature, its ordered harmony, its evidences of purposeful advance. But if God is the totality of the universe, as pantheism holds—if God *is* all persons, all physical things, all natural laws and cosmic forces, then we are left with no explanation at all of how persons or things came to be or of how laws and forces came into operation. Not in an abstract logical whole, or impersonal thought system, or bare one-ness, do we find an explanation of the ordered unity of the universe. We find this only in an ordering, unitary Mind. System requires a Systematizer. Purpose requires a Purposer. God is not only Thought, but Thinker.

Further considerations militate against the pantheistic position. If we make God everything we make him nothing. As Spinoza put it in a famous phrase, "All determination is negation." This means that every attribute we can apply to God implies also its opposite, if God is the All—and they cancel each other. Goodness and badness, wisdom and folly, beauty and ugliness, power and impotence—all are embraced within the Whole. Therefore the Whole has no specific character of its own. Spinoza preferred wholeness to

definiteness of quality in his conception of God, and gave to God an infinity of attributes. But if we are to think of God as having any moral qualities, we cannot have a God who is everything in general and nothing in particular.

This objection, in its classic form, is intellectual rather than practical. But it holds in practical life. If we spread our idea of God out till it gets too thin, it vanishes. When humanism makes God the totality of human aspirations toward goodness, soon we have human aspirations, but no God. When nature-worship makes God the totality of physical nature, it is not long before we have physical nature left, but no God. If there is a God at all, he must be something in particular. An everything-in-general God is the equivalent of none.

A still more serious objection emerges from this—an objection which pantheists for centuries struggled with. If God is the totality of all there is, then every human individual is part of God. This seems, to be sure, to exalt man's station. But it is hard on God! Human evil then is God's evil; human error is God's error. If I am part of God, my acts, however sinful, are God's acts; my thoughts, however foolish and wrong, are God's thoughts.

Furthermore, on such a view you and I are both parts of God, and you and I think differently and act differently. Which of us, when we disagree, is really

God? Or if we both are (as we must be, according to pantheism) how can God be doing such contradictory things? And there are millions of us in the world! Is God to be held responsible for the evil and error of all these millions? Can God by some sort of metaphysical magic harmonize all these discords?

We shrink from the idea of a God who sins and makes mistakes. We want a perfect God or none. And this is based on a true intuition, for it is of the very nature of God to be perfect. Whatever solution we get of the problem of evil and error (and the problem at best is not an easy one), we must somehow find the clue to man's misdeeds and shortcomings within himself. I cannot say that when I sin, God sins, and it is not my fault. Our moral sense rebels.

Likewise any speculative attempt to escape the difficulty by saying that in the perfection of the Absolute, all evil is transmuted into good and discord into harmony, fails at a crucial point. If God sees the world through my eyes *as I see it,* he sees it falsely in manifold respects; and seeing falsely he cannot be the Absolute, nor the all-wise God of religion. On the other hand if he does not see it as I see it, but in some transmuted form, then God's experience and mine are not identical, and I am not God. Nor are you, or the rest of the human millions, or all of us together. Each of us is a separate individual, and no other being, not even God, can view the world exactly as I view it. I

am I, and you are you, and God is God. Pantheism thus becomes impossible.

. . . .

"Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet;
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.
God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us rejoice,
For if He thunder by law, the thunder is yet His voice."

Tennyson calls this the higher pantheism; it could more appropriately be called the higher theism. It represents the outreaching of the religious spirit for a real God with whom he may commune in the inner depths of his own nature, and a God whom he can find revealed in the majesty of a physical universe that obeys the laws of divine Law-giver. Only a personal God can hear the worshipper when he speaks; a personal God not only thunders by law but gives good gifts to men by the orderly processes which he has established for the welfare of the world.

Our God, if we have a God, must be one that the soul of man can worship and fix his trust upon in time of need, and must be one that will not affront the thought of scientist or philosopher. Such a God must be an indwelling power that is manifest in human life, in physical things, in natural law, in creative energy. Such a God must be something more than a sum of all

the universe; for it is the "something more" that makes him God. Such a God we find in a Supreme Personality who is creative, intelligent, purposeful, good—in a God of love and sympathy and tender yearning who strives with our strivings and suffers with our sufferings. Such a God is the God of Christian theism, and in such a God we may live and move and have our being.

CHAPTER IX

WHY DO MEN SUFFER?

Why do men suffer? Can there be a good God in a world of pain? If God can stop it, why doesn't he? Is it God or the devil who sends it? No question is asked more often by suffering humanity—and no question is harder to answer.

The last alternative suggested, that maybe it is not God but the devil who sends suffering, we shall have to hold in abeyance till the next chapter. Suffice it to say at this point that His Satanic Majesty has no respectable philosophical status. The question in any case carries us back to the idea of God, for granting that there were a devil and that he sent the trouble, we should still have to ask why God let him do it.

We have already touched somewhat on the problem of pain in our survey of the objections to the belief in God's reality, and also in looking at the evidences for a teleological universe. But we must now face the problem more specifically, for unless its challenge can be met religion has but uncertain standing-ground.

Let us begin by getting rid of any illusions. Suffering is not imaginary, or trivial, or all a hidden form of good. It is real, and very real, and permeates all of life. No person has ever lived who has not somehow felt its touch. Life on the whole is happy, and for

most people has more of happiness in it than pain. But nobody is happy all the time. Those most significant and unescapable events, birth and death, bring pain both to the participant and to those most closely bound by ties of love and blood. And in all between birth and death, life is harassed by the thousand ills that flesh is heir to, and often racked still more bitterly by sufferings of spirit. Even those who manage to find life fairly comfortable and pleasant, whether from the bounty of circumstance or a genial disposition, must confront "life's minor collisions." We suffer from lack of time to do all we want to do, and lack of money to buy all we want to get, and endless other lacks and limitations. It is a characteristic human phenomenon to wish for something we cannot have. Nor is pain and the sense of thwarted desire limited to man: physical suffering, at least, prevails in the animal world. Pain seems to be a universal attribute of life.

Some of this pain can be seen to serve a useful purpose. Suffering often contributes to higher goods and serves as a useful moral discipline. Of that we shall later have more to say. But it is useless to blink the fact that there is much more pain in life than can be seen to contribute to man's moral welfare. Suffering often crushes higher values. There are situations in which it is useless to talk about religion, or goodness, or beauty, or truth. When a man is starving for lack of bread you cannot feed him spiritual food. When his body is racked with torturing pain all exhortations

to appreciate the beauty of the world become mere cant. Men are driven again and again to what the world calls crime by suffering, or by suffering linked with love of family. Suffering is a real and terrible factor in human existence. No person, whether or not he has suffered severely in his own life, has a right to minimize or be callous to the sufferings of others.

1. *With what outlook shall we view the world?*

The universe is here. It is here with a great deal of suffering in it. There are plenty of people to tell how they would like to make the world, if only they had the making of it! One finds them in every garage and barber-shop and college class-room. Within limits we can remake the world—at least that part of it which has to do with man's relations with man, and with man's power over nature. But the people who are most voluble in telling how they would make the world are generally not disposed to do a vast amount of work in changing its remakable features. And as for its basic unmodifiable traits, we shall get farther if we try to *understand* them, and adjust life to them, than we shall if we expend our time and eloquence in telling how we would like to make the world.

But in accepting it, how shall we look upon it? As a great soulless, Godless machine? As a vale of tears so beset with pain and evil that it invites only dumb endurance or extinction? As a perfect world in which its seeming pain is a vast illusion? Or as a field of

moral conflict, an imperfect world capable of being made better by earnest effort? Somewhere within these four categories most of the views which touch the problem may be placed.

(1) *Atheism.* There is, first, the view-point of atheism, usually linked with materialism, which says that intellectually the fact of suffering presents no problem. Since the world is merely a great machine, it is irrational to expect it to be good, or to be concerned with human values! One might as well expect a hill of beans to burst into speech as to expect the universe to care whether or not men suffer. Inexorable Natural Law (carefully capitalized) does all the determining of destiny that is done. Therefore men had better cease bothering their foolish heads about the relation of a good God to an evil world, and make the best of it.

The atheistic view has a measure of plausibility in it, and is not to be anathematized by the religious simply because it is atheistic. Unpleasant epithets get us nowhere. Atheism more than once has rendered good service to religion by jolting it out of its smug complacency! But when carefully examined, the atheistic view leaves unexplained too many things to be satisfactory to critical thought. It does, to be sure, give an intellectual relief from the mystery of evil. But it entangles us straightway in the mystery of the good. There is much more of good in life than can be adequately accounted for on the basis of a mechanistic,

materialistic universe. All the evidence previously cited which points to the belief that this is a friendly, value-loving world guided by a moral purpose must be cast out, or at least overlooked, if atheism be accepted. Furthermore, all the arguments which point to the need of a Supreme Mind as an explanation of the unity, rationality and interacting harmony of the world—and even of its very existence—militate against the atheistic position. If we are going to turn atheists to escape mysteries, we shall find we have escaped from the frying-pan into the fire.

The atheist's solution of the problem of suffering robs him of the greatest practical asset of religion; namely, confidence in a good God upon whom men may rely for moral victory over the ills of life. To people of some temperaments, reliance upon any power outside themselves, whether human or divine, seems like mere cowardice.

Yet however much we may pride ourselves upon being the masters of our fate and the captains of our souls, most of us, under "the bludgeonings of chance" turn for comfort and strength—if not to God—at least to our friends. Unless it be cowardly to seek human aid in the hour of trial, it is not cowardly to turn to a more-than-human power—if we can believe that there is one to whom to turn. The comfort and self-mastery over suffering to be derived from faith in God is not in itself an argument for cleaving to it, but it should make us pause before rejecting it. We must remember

that it is at least as unwise and irrational to reject without reasons as to believe.

(2) *Pessimism.* A second attitude which is frequently but not necessarily linked with atheism is that of pessimism. There are many kinds of pessimism. Too much work, or too little sleep, or too much worry, or indigestion, or jaundice, or anything else that upsets the even tenor of the body's functioning will make the world look black, and life appear a futile process. This kind of pessimism needs rest more than argument, the physician more than the philosopher. But there are other types of pessimism that have a more stable intellectual foundation.

Philosophical pessimism asserts that life has no goal, or at least no goal of sufficient worth to justify all the pain and effort that is thrust upon us. In the philosophies of India centuries ago a note of pessimism laid its stamp upon the thought of that land, and gave it a "world-denying" quality which has persisted to the present. Before the day of Gautama the Buddha, the wheel of birth with its endless transmigrations, its inexorable law of Karma, its round of thwarted desire and pain-filled existence, was already baffling men with the apparent hopelessness of life. In Schopenhauer, who was influenced by Buddhistic thought, we find the world as blind Will, a never-ceasing struggle but a struggle going nowhere, and life a dismal process from which we humans, tortured with unfilled desires, can find final respite only in the cessation of desire.

In the present day many are proclaiming a "philosophy of disillusionment," and Bertrand Russell bids us build our hopes for future progress "on the firm foundation of an unyielding despair." [1] Human ideals and values—human life itself—are but flecks of foam upon the ocean of a vast material universe, a bit of effervescence that will vanish with the forces that have brought them into being. "Brief and powerless is Man's life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way; for Man, condemned today to lose his dearest, tomorrow himself to pass through the gate of darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that ennoble his little day." [2]

The limits of space forbid an adequate treatment of these philosophies of despair. They are a wholesome antidote to a too easy optimism. But as an ultimate metaphysic, they leave out too much. They leave out the evidences for a Rational Mind at the helm of the universe, and for intrinsic values that are vastly more than flecks of foam. We shall not here retraverse the grounds for believing in the existence of such a Mind. But if there is a God who is interested in values, there is no reason to suppose that all of life is derelict, aimlessly driven by winds of futile desire. If human values like love and sympathy, the struggle for nobler

[1] See Russell, *A Free Man's Worship*, p. 7, edition of 1927.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

living and the quest for truth, are *real* values—not mere whims of preference—they are worth conserving. And if these values are grounded in the purposes and will of a God who is eternal, they can be trusted to endure. We may face not only individual death but the ultimate dissolution of all life upon this planet and still be confident that these values will endure. If there is something permanent at the heart of things, life has a meaning; and "our light affliction which is but for a moment" takes its place in the quest for an ultimate and enduring Good.[3]

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Strangely enough, another type of pessimism grows out of religion itself, and we find soils opposite in kind bringing forth the same fruit. Religious pessimism is generally premillenarian. It declares that we are living in evil days, and that the world is all the time getting worse. It sighs for "the good old days" but without hope of their return. It sees no hope of the world's redemption save a final cataclysm by which the Lord will take his saints to dwell with him in glory while sinners are cast into outer darkness. (It is to be noted that those who so prophesy are always among the saints!) Such a view reflects early Christian and

[3] This raises the question of immortality, the treatment of which must be deferred to Chapter XII. Any rational view of immortality must look upon it as bound up with the conservation of values, rather than as a mere means of reward.

medieval other-worldliness, and finds its Scriptural justification in a literal interpretation of certain passages in the apocalyptic literature, particularly the book of Revelation.

The premillenarian view is shot through with inconsistencies. Its worst practical fault is that it offers no rationally grounded stimulus to human endeavor to check the world's downward course. Its action is often better than its logic at this point: the natural inference is that if the world is going to the devil anyway there is no use of trying to stop it, but there is often a good deal of sturdy effort to keep one's self and one's friends from the devil's clutches! [4] Its worst intellectual shortcoming is an implicit lack of faith in the power of God, for God can scarcely be the Almighty if he can check the downward course of the world only by a final smash-up. Such a view overlooks the evidences of purposeful progress which can be seen in present as well as past, and rests its pessimism on a too narrow, short-range outlook.

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Probably the most common type of pessimism is neither philosophical nor religious: it is the pessimism

[4] I once knew a man who refused to let his son go to college because he thought the end of the world would come before the boy could graduate, and the money would be wasted. He never seemed to sense the force of the boy's argument that in that event, it would be equally useless to save the money. The same man was very zealous to get his family and friends "saved" before the last trumpet should sound.

of thwarted desire. Such is the attitude of the person who thinks the world ought to give him a good time, and when he fails to find it, faces life with a snarl. It is the cynical sneer of the man who, seeking roses, finds only ashes. This habit of mind has been greatly aggravated by the increased complexity and tensions of modern life, with a greater range of allurements to pleasure and a decreasing amount of moral and social restraints. It has become the permanent disposition of so many that an ever-increasing toll of suicide betrays its seriousness.

This personal pessimism which comes from thwarted desire has often a background which merits deep sympathy. It arises in many cases from a great misfortune or series of misfortunes which sorely shakes the sufferer's faith in God or man. When the hand of death is laid suddenly upon those who are dearest, those who apparently have everything to live for, it is not easy to look upon life optimistically. When one builds bright hopes for the future and these are shattered by financial loss or broken health, it is hard to see justice in the universe. Any disaster, particularly sudden disaster with its nervous shock, may blacken one's outlook and lead to a permanently cynical and pessimistic attitude. Self-pity adds its corroding force. Unless the sufferer has religious faith, a work worth doing, and an unselfish interest in others to sustain him, his plight is tragic.

However, in many more instances pessimism, and

even suicide, arise not from intense suffering but from a thwarted chase for the lesser goods of life. Hedonism, the belief that happiness is the true goal of life, has in it a strange paradox; for the more one pursues happiness to the exclusion of altruistic service and the enrichment of personality, the less likely he is to find it. The lower the plane on which happiness or pleasure is placed, the less capable it is of bringing genuine or permanent satisfaction. The search for amusement, thrills and economic gain which characterizes modern life is steadily increasing the belief that "life is but an empty bubble," and is decreasing the ability to find satisfaction in inner resources and the finer values of life. "Jazzmania," the quest for more thrills and more "kick" is the result, and again the cause—for the chronic pleasure-seeker, like the drug-fiend, once started in his search for thrills can be happy only by getting more. The resulting physical derangement and psychic dissatisfaction are very conducive to chronic pessimism, despair and suicide.

This type of pessimism is very hard to eradicate, for people who are its victims are usually in too abnormal a nervous condition to be reasoned with. But from an intellectual standpoint, it is easy to point out its deficiencies. If pessimism arises from the hedonistic assumption that the world ought to give us a good time, the fact that it does not do so should lead us to challenge the assumption. And obviously the purpose of the world, whatever it may be, is not to give men a good

time. If its purpose is to develop moral fibre, then moral struggle is indispensable. The fact that a richer and more permanent satisfaction arises from seeking the higher goods of life is in itself an argument for the belief that the universe has a moral purpose.

(3) *Optimism.* Pessimism is unsatisfactory both as a philosophy and as a practical attitude toward life. We turn then to optimism, the belief that the world is good, and that everything in the world either is, or can be, good in the long run. This is obviously a *pleasanter* philosophy than pessimism. Is it a truer one?

Optimism, like pessimism, is of three major types—philosophical, religious, and personal. A moderate amount of optimism of each kind is intellectually justified and practically helpful: an overdose is false and fatal.

Philosophical optimism is generally associated with the Hegelian philosophy of absolute idealism. Holding a pantheistic view, it asserts that in the perfection of the whole, evil is merely negative good and will eventually be transmuted into good. No event, it is said, can be regarded as evil apart from the cosmic process and final goal, and each element of suffering, however evil it may appear to our limited vision, is to be regarded as contributing its part to the perfection of the Absolute.

Such an absolute optimism is over-done. It tends to overlook the evilness of evil as men experience it, and the unwarranted claims for a thorough-going optimism

put forth by absolute idealists in the nineteenth century have been in no small degree responsible for the growth of philosophies of atheism and despair in the twentieth.[5] It is well to view things with the vision of the whole. But though we view the cosmic process *sub specie æternitatis,* as Spinoza bade us, this ought not to blind us to the evilness of suffering as we experience it here and now. It is scarcely ethical to regard men as suffering in order that God, or the Absolute, may enjoy the harmony of a perfect whole.

. . . .

Religious optimism, resting its case sometimes on absolutistic philosophy, sometimes on Biblical statements and traditional theology, holds that everything that happens is "for the best." Every event is ordained (often said to be foreordained) by the will of God, and many events mysterious to human eyes are to be accepted as the dispensation of an all-wise Providence.

There is a fundamental truth about the convictions of religious optimism. It rests back on the moral intuitions which lead to faith in the objectivity of values. Yet it has more than once been used to justify the *status quo:* to excuse the domination of the strong over the weak, and to retard the advance of scientific knowledge. There are still many in our churches who

[5] See Albert Schweitzer, *Civilization and Ethics.* Also Reinhold Niebuhr, "Can Schweitzer Save Us from Russell?," *The Christian Century,* September 3, 1925.

believe that "the poor we have always with us" because God wants these people to be poor—and with such a conviction it is easy to help along the process! Only lately have we escaped from the age-long assumption that woman must suffer in childbirth for the sins of Eve, and must forever be in subjection to man because God wills it so. Economic injustice, war, race discrimination and other giant evils still find support in the conviction that the existing order is ordained of God for some beneficent design.

. . . .

Personal optimism, whether temperamental or cultivated, says that by an act of will we must refuse to look upon the gloomy side of life. Like Pollyanna, we must "play the glad game." Carried over into numerous pseudo-psychological and pseudo-religious cults, this philosophy bids men be happy by forgetting their troubles—and incidentally other people's troubles!

Personal optimism also, though it has brought to many poise and peace and power, has been greatly travestied. Nobody wants to—nobody *ought* to—"play the glad game" all the time. There is too much of cruelty and hardship in the world. It is no accident that the Christian Science and "New Thought" movements, the theosophies and pseudo-psychologies, find most of their adherents among the well-to-do. One

can pretty well forget his troubles when one has plenty of money, and food, and clothes, and friends, and social standing. One cannot do so thus easily when one does not know where the money is coming from to pay the rent.

All three of the types of optimism thus briefly outlined have the characteristic of enjoining men to transcend the apparent evil of life by believing that everything is good. Such transcendence may on the one hand lead to moral victories over the ills of life by cultivating faith and courage, hope and confidence. On the other hand, it may lead to an easy tolerance of preventable evils and a deadening of sympathy for the sufferings of others. It is well to possess the fine art of being happy by forgetting one's troubles. But no one has a right to purchase happiness by forgetting other people's troubles. Jesus wept.

(4) *Meliorism.* If the problem of pain cannot be met by denying that there is a problem, or by asserting an aimless world, or by bolstering up our spirits with an all-embracing optimism, what is left? The truest theories are often the simplest. It is still possible to believe that the world is neither wholly good nor bad; that it is not all that it ought to be, yet is capable of being made better. It is still possible to believe that pain is not the last word in pain, but points the way to something better. This common sense view is called meliorism.

In most disputes, the truth does not lie in "either-or" but in "both-and." The present query is no exception. Meliorism recognizes some truth in both optimism and pessimism, but says that neither can give us the whole truth. It challenges human effort to make the world better by eradicating as much as possible of its sin and suffering. Its incentive to betterment is compatible with a wide variety of religious views; for whether there be no God, or a God limited in power, or an omnipotent God, we still can "carry on."

The melioristic attitude, if it is consistent, rests its case on the power of the ideal to transcend the obvious. Not all who adopt its program do this consciously; social workers, for example, sometimes labor very zealously for the betterment of the social order on the basis of a "realism" which professes to scorn ideals. But without faith in a *better,* and a better *worth working for,* and a better *with some chance of permanence,* it would simply be useless to act. And the result would be inactivity. Psychologically this fact is at the bottom of the truism that one works best when he works at something that interests him. It interests him because he thinks there is a chance of accomplishing something, of "bettering" something—economically, artistically, intellectually, socially, morally, spiritually. Remove this hope, and interest dies. Teachers, preachers, employers of labor—all whose duty it is to

make others work, would do well to appropriate this simple principle.

Transferred to the realm of religious faith, this means that the impulse to better the world rests back upon the implicit assumption that the obvious facts of life are not the real facts. That is, not the ultimate facts. The obvious fact is a world of suffering; the real fact is a world in which suffering has meaning. "Unless there is something behind the fact of pain, some kind of mystery or problem in it whose solution shows the pain to be other than it pretends, there is no happiness for man in this world or the next. . . . The fact is, that men have never taken their troubles that way (at face value): they have always assumed that pain is to be explained." [6] The only hopeless grief is that which abandons the ingrained conviction that grief has meaning. Anything can be endured if it must be, improved if it may be, in a world where there is hope.

There can be an eternal hope in a God-directed world: a feeble, flickering hope in a world where human strivings are doomed at last to end in nothingness. The hope of a cosmic hope brings us back once more to God.

2. *Is God limited?*

Let us return to our starting-point—the relation of God to a world of pain. Religion is confronted by the

[6] Hocking, *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, pp. 218, 219.

dilemma of God's goodness and omnipotence. There is more of suffering in life than can be seen to serve a useful purpose. If God is good, and is able to prevent this suffering, why doesn't he? Thousands from the depths of suffering have said that God must be dead, or impotent, or a moral monster. As John Stuart Mill observed, the universe does things every day which men are hanged for doing. Is God a murderer when lives are snuffed out with no apparent reason? Or is he powerless to prevent this slaughter?

Among people who believe in God at all there is an almost universal belief that he is good. An immoral God, or one not interested in human values, would not long retain the allegiance of worshippers. People care less about a theoretical explanation of the universe than about a power to help them in their moral battles. In the apparent conflict between goodness and omnipotence, it is the latter, if either, which is surrendered.

Many have felt constrained by the problem of evil to give up the belief in God's omnipotence and posit a Finite God. This view was advocated by John Stuart Mill, and has been made popular by William James and H. G. Wells. It holds, in brief, that God is powerless to prevent much of the evil of the world, and that God and man must work together to banish it. Though there is hope of much improvement, the final outcome for both God and man is problematic.

Another view having close affinities with the Finite

God conception[7] but not commonly so labeled, is that of a dualistic universe in which nature is regarded as being outside the control of God. This is the view of "the man on the street" who says that nature or fate (not God) is responsible for the calamities that strike him. It is held also by some philosophers.[8]

The belief in a Finite God, or a dualistic universe, at first glance seems very plausible. It leaves grounds for religious faith, and it cuts at one stroke the Gordian knot of the goodness versus omnipotence dilemma. Furthermore, it offers a worthy challenge to human effort, for if God is doing the best he can to make this a fairer world it behooves men to cast in their effort on his side. Every view must recognize some limitations upon God's power, and it requires only an extension of these limitations to explain the evil of the universe.

But upon closer examination, difficulties appear. There are objections to this view which make it of very doubtful value.

In the first place, it puts nature outside the control of God but fails to explain the origin of nature. In popular parlance we may ask, "How did nature get that way?" Did God create it to war against himself? It seems scarcely credible that if God has a moral purpose for the world, he would deliberately have

[7] The belief in a Finite God and in a dualistic universe are grouped together here only because they have in common the denial of God's complete control over the world. At other points there are wide divergences.

[8] See R. Niebuhr, *Does Civilization Need Religion?*, Ch. VIII, for an able defense of this position.

brought into being an opposing power to war against himself and thwart this moral purpose. God has no need of exercising his moral muscle by setting up an obstruction for the sake of knocking it down again.

Or did God create nature in the beginning for a good purpose, and it has got out of hand? Has it, since creation, been running on its own power, and run amuck? Deism holds that since creation, nature has been self-running. But deism we have found to be inadequate, since it satisfies neither faith nor reason to believe in an "absentee God" who at some time in the distant past set the world running and then left it to run by itself.

Or was nature created by some power other than God? The question still remains as to who, or what, this other power could be. If God is not the Ultimate, then there must be some sort of super-God to account both for the God religion worships and this other nondescript Something that created nature.

Whichever way we turn, the best answer we can get to the question "Who made the world?" is to say that God did, and still does. The problem can be adequately met only by the hypothesis of an ever-creative God maintaining and controlling nature—by a God who is immanent in nature and not to be excluded from any of its activities. And such a God is neither Finite nor confronted by a rival.

A second objection is the fact that a view which limits God's power over nature fails to account for the

harmonious interplay of parts. In examining the arguments for the belief in God we found that without an organizing, unifying power, the orderliness of the universe remains a sheer mystery. We live in a world of natural law which gives evidence of a Law-giver. In the tornado and the avalanche, as in the gentle zephyr and the falling rose petal, the operation of orderly processes is revealed. Whether or not "all things work together for good to them that love God," we know at least that all things *work together*. But if God's power is limited in such a fashion that the acts of nature are outside his control, we are left completely in the dark as to *why* things work together.

The most serious objection to the theory of a limited God is its moral aspect. If God is the Almighty, we can be confident that eventually his moral purpose will be achieved. In the pain of conflict we can hope for ultimate victory. Beset with ills that cannot be averted, we can rise above them by an inner victory of spirit through trust in an almighty and all-wise God. If one can say with confidence,

> "Round our weakness Thy completeness,
> Round our restlessness Thy rest,"

neither physical pain nor distress of mind can crush the soul. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee," said the prophet; and thousands in the shadow of pain and fear have felt this peace. It is the task of religion to bring to men this faith and hope, this peace and confidence. It cannot

properly perform its function of inculcating trust unless there be an Almighty God to rely upon.

Religion has often fallen into error at this point. It has accepted disasters as a "mysterious dispensation of Providence" instead of seeking to eradicate their causes. It has sat quietly by in the midst of preventable evils, saying piously that "in his own good time God will make all things right." Progress has been expected to take place automatically. It is entirely possible for trust in the power of God to produce a sluggish moral lethargy. "Religion," Karl Marx said, "is the opiate of the people." Of perversions of religion this is true.

But the moral power engendered by confidence in an all-powerful God, perverted though it has been, is not lightly to be cast aside. Some minds find an incentive to action in the thought that since God is carrying a heavy up-hill load and doing the best he can, the rest of us must help him up the hill. Most people find a greater incentive in the thought that they are co-workers with a power that cannot fail. The values of life take on a new meaning if they are thought of as eternal values; they can be trusted to endure only if they rest upon an eternal foundation. There is a shout of triumph—and there is also a stirring challenge to new effort in the pæan, "Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." If we relinquish this faith, it will be no easy matter to find a substitute.

We have seen that a Finite God, or a God unable to control the phenomena of nature, fails to perform the functions demanded by both reason and religion. We must grasp the dilemma by its horns and inquire whether in any sense God *can* be both omnipotent and good. Religion has, for the most part, assumed that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." In most Christian churches there is a periodical declaration of faith in "God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth." Must this faith be given up?

It depends on what is meant by "the Almighty." If it means a being absolutely without limitations of any kind, it means that the Almighty could make a square triangle, or an inch a foot long. If I am going to be rigidly literal in the belief that "with God all things are possible," I must believe a great deal. I must believe that if God so willed, time could be reversed to put me back to live in the year 2000 B.C.; that I could be bodily present in Boston and San Francisco at the same moment; that I might suddenly turn into somebody else—George Washington or Julius Cæsar, perhaps; that all the adventures of Alice in Wonderland and any conceivable flight of fancy could be true. Not many people expect such things from God. The reason we do not expect them is that we assume that God is rational. And if there is a God who performs the unifying, harmonizing functions of which the universe gives evidence, he must be rational. This means that God himself can only "do the doable and

know the knowable," though it does not mean that what God can do or know is limited to what human minds consider to be doable and knowable.

Furthermore, unless I am to charge God with all my own sinful deeds, I must assume that he has given me the power to know the difference between good and evil, and to choose between them. If he has created me with the power of moral choice and has laid upon me the responsibility of choosing good, not even God himself can bend my will if I voluntarily choose evil. Accordingly I may think many evil thoughts and do many evil acts which God, because of my stubborn will, is powerless to check.

Such a view holds, not that God is helpless, but that God is *self-limited*. It holds that in his desire to develop a race of moral beings who will *achieve* our goodness—not have it thrust upon us, God has voluntarily limited his own power by the creation of human persons with moral freedom. God cannot then be held responsible for the evil that men do—unless the whole process of creating men with the power to choose our goodness instead of making us pious little automata be considered an evil act. Some so regard it—but not many of us would want to be pious automata if we could. In spite of the limitations imposed by the demands of rationality and by the voluntary creation of men with moral freedom, God is still in an important sense omnipotent; for God is limited by no power that does not proceed from his own will.

Though this be a somewhat qualified omnipotence, it avoids the previous difficulties. It regards God as the creator and maintainer of the world, immanent in nature, guiding it onward, and coöperating with men in the achievement of a moral purpose. It holds that the world is a sphere of conflict for the development of men with moral fibre, and it offers the hope that if men will do their part, victory is certain. It supplies the God of power and goodness—both power and goodness—that men must have for peace and confidence in a troubled world.

3. *Why does God let men suffer?*

The reader has doubtless been looking rather impatiently for an answer to the question, "Why do men suffer?" The preliminary statement given in Chapter V can now be amplified. The direct causes of suffering can be found (a) in ourselves, (b) in other human individuals, (c) in the forces of physical nature. Let us see whether each type can be reconciled with the idea of a good and loving God.

Much of the suffering of life is obviously caused by man, and presents no great problem except the means of educating people to prevent it. When we violate the physical and moral laws that are written into the structure of the universe, when we are too ignorant or careless to protect ourselves from harm, suffering is the natural consequence. When one eats mince pie, doughnuts, cheese and a plank steak at midnight, he is apt to

be punished before morning. When one exposes himself to germs, the germs lay hold of him. In the field of morals also, the law of cause and effect is inviolable. One cannot play with fire, emotionally or otherwise, and not get burned. One cannot commit adultery and be unscathed. One cannot steal the property, or the reputation, or the happiness, of another without robbing himself at the same time. External penalties of wrong-doing may be dodged; one cannot dodge the inner penalties. There is an ultimate moral justice in the universe.

In a very real sense, "the wages of sin is death." This does not mean, as our fathers thought, that God vents his wrath upon the sinful or the negligent by visiting them with calamities. The book of Job was written to disprove this old idea. It is a relic of paganism to think that suffering or death is always a penalty for sin, or to believe, as is still sometimes unfeelingly suggested, that when a child dies the parents are being punished for some secret guilt. Much unnecessary anguish of spirit has been caused by this belief. Jesus gives a more wholesome interpretation. "And as he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him saying, Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents." [9]

It means, however, that if the world is meant to be

[9] John 9: 1-3.

a family, as it appears to be, man cannot with impunity treat it as a battlefield. It means that if one is to find the truest happiness, one must find it in the realm of intelligent moral living. It means that there is an orderly principle of cause and effect at work in the physical and moral realm which makes it true that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Obviously in this type of Nemesis there can be no conflict with the idea of a good and loving God.

. . . .

But what of the suffering caused by the sins and negligence of others? What of a wreck at sea caused by the carelessness of crew or captain? This is a more difficult problem, for the world is full of this kind of suffering and it looks like a flat contradiction of the principles of justice.

In approaching this problem we must remember that we are living in an interrelated world, in a society bound together by an inescapable network of *human* as well as physical relations. No man lives to himself alone, nor could he if he wished. All the way from the family group to the widest outreach of international relations, my good helps others and my evil harms others. If I were Robinson Crusoe on a desert island I could do as I pleased—till my man Friday came. But in a world of millions of Fridays, I must guard carefully my acts, lest others suffer from my sin or negligence. "Ye are not your own."

With all the suffering it entails, this social interconnectedness is a great blessing. Not many would be willing to part with its benefits for the sake of escaping its limitations. To most people, solitary confinement for life would be a worse punishment than death. But if we are going to accept the benefits of living in a world of social relations, we must pay its price—we cannot expect something for nothing. The price is the possibility that each may suffer from the acts of others.

It is a dire calamity when the ship goes down at sea from human negligence. But without the labor of the crew and captain we could not ride in ships. Every disaster is an incentive to greater future safety—or is such when man will learn its lesson. Most of us would rather ride in ships, at a risk—and eat food and buy goods carried in ships, at a risk—than abandon the corporate enterprise of traversing the sea. Viewed in the large, the interconnectedness of our social world is far from being an unjust arrangement. But whether just or unjust in concrete cases, it is (or ought to be) a tremendous challenge to moral endeavor. It puts the responsibility upon men for eradicating preventable evils and making the benefits of our social interrelatedness transcend its disadvantages. World brotherhood, social passion, sympathy, love, and all the finer virtues are linked with it. "By coöperative effort we build a holy city."

The fact that the innocent must suffer with and for the guilty is a law of life. Accepted as a moral chal-

lenge it makes for altruism and nobility of character. "He who loves most suffers most," whether it be a mother's love or the love of Christ. Vicarious sacrifice is the noblest element in life. It leads us straight to the heart of God himself, for the shadow of the cross is a symbol of God's eternal suffering for men, and with men. He who has not glimpsed this truth has failed to catch the full meaning of pain's redemptive power.

"The cry of man's anguish went up to God,
Lord take away pain!
The shadow that darkens the world Thou hast made;
The close-coiling chain
That strangles the heart; the burden that weighs
On the wings that should soar—
Lord, take away pain from the world Thou hast made
That it love Thee the more!

"Then answered the Lord to the cry of the world,
Shall I take away pain,
And with it the power of the soul to endure,
Made strong by the strain?
Shall I take away pity that knits heart to heart
And sacrifice high?
Will ye lose all your heroes that lift from the fire
White brows to the sky?
Shall I take away love that redeems with a price
And smiles at its loss?
Can ye spare from your lives that would cling unto mine
The Christ on his cross?" [10]

. . . .

[10] Anonymous verses written on the wall of a hospital. Quoted by E. I. Bosworth in *What It Means to be a Christian*, p. 27.

But doubtless the reader is saying that this is not the real heart of the problem. Suffering that is man-induced may be accounted for. But what about the fires and floods, the droughts and pestilences, the earthquakes and tornadoes that can be ascribed to no human agent? Why does nature seem so ruthless—so indifferent to human values?

Some, as we have seen, seek a way out by denying that God is able to control nature; others by denying outright that there is a God. We have found that both these courses plunge us in new mysteries and raise more problems than they solve. If we are going to have a satisfactory explanation of the universe as a whole, we had better adhere to the belief that God is the ultimate cause of every physical event—and take the consequences.

Even on this basis, there is a way out. No physical event can be judged to be good or evil apart from the purpose it expresses and the relation it bears to the rest of life. Whether I strike a match to light my kitchen fire or to ignite the dynamite that will wreck a city block, the physical act is the same. Its evil in the case of the dynamite lies in a malevolent purpose designed to bring about malevolent ends. If the physical events which we call the acts of nature, viewed in the large, can be seen to express a good purpose and to bring about good ends, then we may believe, in spite of the suffering they entail, that they are the acts of a good and loving God.

This, of course, is just what they appear on the surface not to do. It is easy to jump to the conclusion that they reveal neither a good purpose nor good consequences, and therefore indicate either no God or one indifferent or powerless. But let us look beneath the surface. In the case of the suffering caused to others by human sin and negligence, we found that the solution lay in an interacting network of relations. We have repeatedly found reason to believe that the universe, in its physical aspects, is also an interacting system. If the system is beneficial on the whole, though it sometimes causes suffering in its orderly functioning, it is good.

We live in a world of natural law. Sometimes these orderly processes catch us and crush us. But would the world be better off without them? If given the choice of living in a lawless or a law-abiding world, which would we choose? Any rational being would choose the latter. We are not given such a choice; we are placed in such a world. The power of gravity has often caused much suffering. But suppose there were no power of gravity to rely upon. A brick falls from a chimney and kills a passer-by. It is a real misfortune. But imagine the chaos and utter desolation that would reign if bricks went flying everywhere, and our feet refused to stay planted on the ground, and everything on the earth went flying off into space! Without these orderly processes which sometimes cause us suffering, life could not be maintained for a second

upon this planet. If, as religion claims, these processes are God's ways of working, he is good.

The price we pay for living in a world of natural law, as for living in a world of social relations, is the possibility that some times suffering may result. It would often suit our convenience and even avert the loss of human values and human lives, if God would set aside his orderly ways of working in response to our desires. But it is doubtful whether, viewing the situation broadly, it would be worth the cost. Miracle, in the sense of deviation from the laws of nature, is not inherently impossible, but the modern mind increasingly looks upon it as undesirable. We are better off in a world that can be relied upon to adhere to its established course.

The fact that we live in a world of law presents a challenge to man to seek to understand these orderly processes, to eliminate their ill effects, to coöperate with God in using them for the enhancement of human welfare. At this point religion joins hands with science, for religion must use the results of science if it would banish human misery. Little by little we are learning the secrets of nature. We are learning how to curb its evil and enhance its good. Religion says that we are learning God's ways of working. The fact that we live in a world in which God moves in a mysterious, but increasingly less mysterious, way is an urgent challenge to scientific study and to altruistic service.

But what of those who die in the orderly workings

of these laws of nature? Is personality to be sacrificed for the maintenance of law? In a rational universe personality ought not to perish. We cannot here go into the grounds for belief in immortality; but it must be stated here that without immortality the problem of suffering, difficult at best, becomes well-nigh insoluble.[11] Despite the undeniable superiority of the world of law over a world of no-law, there is still a fundamental irrationality in the universe if God lets innocent, precious lives be snuffed out—permanently snuffed out—to maintain the uniformity of physical nature. Fortunately we are not forced to this conclusion. It is irrational to suppose that personality, the most precious value in the universe and the bearer of all other values, thus goes out. And if personality survives, then the intrinsic values of this life are conserved and greater reaches open up in a life-enrichment of endless growth. Viewed in the vista of eternity, even death is not all evil.

. . . .

We find that neither the suffering caused by man nor nature overthrows the belief in a good and loving God. It points rather to the belief that God wants man to coöperate with him in working out a moral purpose. This purpose, so far as we can discover, is the development in man of all the higher values, the building of richer lives. Some of these values are crushed

[11] See Ch. XII.

by suffering, and it is our business to bend our energies to banish it. Yet paradoxically, a world of no suffering and no struggle would be a world ill-adapted to the development of moral ruggedness. Whatever the purpose of life, we surely are not here to be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease. The world is no "tea-table Elysium." Life is not likely ever to become a care-free summer holiday. But with all the pain and conflict it entails, this is a world in which we may achieve hardihood of character and play our part in human progress. Progress comes ever through conflict, and if suffering urges us toward the goal it serves a useful purpose.

The climax of the book of Job comes not in the restoration of Job's possessions, but in the response which he makes to the whirlwind voice as Jehovah speaks through the storm:

> "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear;
> But now mine eye seeth thee."

Religion works no magic charm to bring men to God, for the processes of religion are not those of magic. Suffering may embitter the spirit; it may also glorify it. Thousands have been brought through suffering to a richer experience of God—to a deeper confidence in the wisdom, power and goodness of the Eternal. Ascension through sacrifice to glory is the way of the cross—and the way of conquest.

We cannot hope to fathom the whole mystery. Only

a being as omniscient as God himself could hope to fathom it. Only with a vision embracing eternity as well as time could we expect to read all the long purposes of God. There are many events in life whereof we can only say with Job, "I lay my hand upon my mouth." But when suffering comes, it makes a difference whether there is a good God, an Almighty God, on whom we may rely. If there is, we can face Gethsemane and say, "Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done."

CHAPTER X

WHY DO MEN SIN?

The age-long problem of evil has two sides, suffering and sin. One mentions sin with a bit of trepidation, for it is no longer good form to talk about it. "Social maladjustment" and "anti-social conduct" you may talk about and be within the pale. But not sin; you are old-fashioned if you mention it. The "integration of personality" has taken the place of the "conversion of sinners." But what's in a name?

There is at least this in a name—the indubitable evidence that the evangelistic efforts of former days make little appeal to the modern mind. We shrink from the very word sin—not because there is anything inherently distasteful about the word, but because it calls up a mental picture of a perfervid evangelist trying to save us from its clutches as he paints a lurid picture of the flaming abyss over which we hang precariously. A great deal of the old-time evangelistic zeal was good; it brought about real "revivals" of religion, and we do ill to see in it only weeping, shouting, hysteria, and frantic appeals to the emotions. All things considered, it probably did more for the kingdom of God and the betterment of society than the apathetic coldness that seems to have settled

over modern religious liberalism. It is better to get results even in a crude way than to scorn crudeness and get no results; and the ringing sincerity and the spiritual fervor of the old-time efforts to convert sinners did accomplish things. But the old-time methods will no longer get results, and the very substitution of the term "integration of personality" for "conversion of sinners" is symbolic of a marked change in psychological outlook.

In these days, if we would help men to a new vision of God and set them on the road to higher living, a less stormy method must be used. Our approach must be more intelligent, perhaps more intellectual. But it must not be less deeply grounded in spiritual verities, nor less emotionally gripping. In its fear of emotionalism, the modern age is in danger of forgetting that it is our emotions that we live by—that drive us to action and color our deepest life-attitudes. Not less emotion in religion, but an emotion cleansed, deepened, enriched, is what we must have if the selfish cynicism, the distraught dissatisfaction, the barren boredom of modern life is to be replaced by the richness of "integrated" personality which was our fathers' religious birthright.

In our discussion of the problem, we shall stick to the old name. It is short and simple and full of meaning. No better substitute has been suggested. Call it by whatever name we like, sin is with us still—an enemy to be vanquished.

1. *What is sin?*

The problems of sin and suffering are related, but not identical. Good people suffer, yet goodness can transcend and glorify pain. Sin is the deeper, fouler evil—humanity's most heinous curse. And what do we mean by it?

Everybody sins—even some who profess to be "wholly sanctified." "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (I John 1: 8). But most of us are better at confessing other people's sins than our own. What is this universal phenomenon—so easy to talk about, so hard to agree upon? We shall proceed negatively by seeing first what sin is *not*.

Quite obviously, no act of an inanimate thing is sin. We have all encountered a good deal of bad weather, never any *sinful* weather. In fact, the point of Mark Twain's remark that there has been a great deal of talk about the weather, but nobody ever did much about it, lies in the very impossibility of reforming the non-sinful.

No animal can sin. If I kick a cat, or a chair, that gets in my way, the cat is no more of a sinner than the chair is. There are *bad* animals in the sense that they sometimes exhibit disagreeable traits or do things that are displeasing to persons. But while we need to be cautious about saying how an animal feels on the inside, it is improbable that an animal has a sense of sin.

An animal cannot say, "The evil that I would not that I do," or "God be merciful to me, a sinner."

No little child can sin. The doctrine of infant damnation, once widely held by Protestant as well as Catholic faiths, now seems crude and cruel and incongruous. It is contrary to Jesus' word that "of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." It is contrary to the ethical principle that one must know the difference between good and evil and have some power to choose between them before he can be held morally responsible. The child at birth is neither moral or immoral, he is non-moral—incapable of moral choice, and his power to do good or evil must develop gradually along with all the rest of his powers. The doctrine of "original sin" is fast disappearing—and the sooner it disappears, the better for theology and human sympathy.

No adult can sin if he is unconscious, or insane, or otherwise bereft of his mental powers. One may snore in sleep, or swear in delirium, and not be responsible. The maniac may kill, and be an object of pity, not of blame. There may, of course, be a high degree of responsibility involved in *getting into* a state of irresponsibility. The drunkard is not responsible for his immediate acts; he is responsible (at least in part) for allowing himself to get drunk. The highly respectable deacon who swears in his sleep or talks unprintable language while under anæsthetics would not be very likely to do so unless he had let such thoughts find lodgment in the subconscious reservoir of the un-

expressed. But it is generally recognized, both by law and by common sense, that there is a difference between the guilt of acts committed deliberately when one is in full possession of his faculties, and those committed when one is mentally incapable of making moral choices. Nobody can be blamed for what he cannot help—a deep truth often over-worked.

Does anybody sin? There is a growing tendency to answer this in the negative, and to say that since everybody is what he is because of his heredity and environment, nobody is able to do other than he does. On this basis nobody can be held morally responsible for his acts. Such a view generally admits the necessity of punishment and restraint for the protection of society, but holds that if a person transgress the moral code it is his misfortune, not his sin. If a Loeb or Leopold or Hickman murders a child for the sake of thrills, the act is not to be regarded as sinful; it is to be viewed charitably as a case of physical derangement or social maladjustment.

Such a view has much to commend it. The study of genetics and sociology reveals many hitherto unsuspected causes for the way men act. The child of the slums, reared in poverty and surrounded by corrupting influences, ought not to be looked upon in the same light as the person whose whole background is one of moral and intellectual culture. The chances are that when Tony steals from the peddler's cart, it is because he is hungry and has never been taught to

respect the difference between mine and thine. There is need of more intelligent effort to eradicate the causes of wrong-doing, and there is need of a great deal more charity in judging the acts of others.

But can we afford to be so charitable in judging ourselves? There's the rub! The view which transforms sin into a sort of moral sickness for which the sinner is not to blame, breaks down when we begin to use it on ourselves. I am obstinate and ill-tempered, perhaps, because my father is, or because I have more to irritate me than most people have. I feel self-justified. I lie and cheat upon occasion—but so does everybody else, and why should I do otherwise! From self-pity and self-exoneration it is only a step to self-indulgence. It is hard to tell how much the present laxity of morals is due to the popularizing of this theory, but it has certainly had its influence. Should the theorists succeed in banishing the sense of sin on any wide-spread scale, a corresponding lessening of the restraints of self-condemnation must be expected—and then more crime and social chaos.

Furthermore, if we attempt politely to bow moral responsibility out the front door, it comes in again at the window. It is an easy matter to say that the individual is not responsible for his misdeeds—that all evil is the fault of society. But if society is responsible, then *somebody* is responsible! Society is no impersonal scape-goat. Society is merely the collective name for a vast group of individuals. There can be

no such thing as a social responsibility which exists apart from the responsibility of the individuals who make up society. It is doubtless true that society is to blame for permitting Tony's father to be underpaid or out of work, and for failing to give Tony the proper moral training in school or church or playground. But if society is to blame, this means that you and I and the rest of the people who make up society are to blame. It means merely that individuals have sinned in failing to recognize sufficiently their moral responsibility for the social welfare—and sin and responsibility are with us still.

We have seen that sin is not the act of any impersonal thing, nor of a human individual devoid of the power of conscious choice. Nor is sin *merely* a form of sickness—however much of personal or social sickness may lie back of it. Our negative study has brought us to a positive principle—simple but far-reaching and profoundly significant—that the person who sins must know the difference between good and evil, and must have some power to choose between them. Whatever the source of his knowledge and moral ideals, the person who sins finds himself in the grip of two opposing desires and chooses the lesser good.

Any act of good or evil must be judged in the light of both the intention of the doer and the consequences which it tends to produce. A person may "mean well" and still do wrong, like the conscientious meddler in

other people's love affairs, because his good intentions are not tempered with wisdom and tact. "In all good conscience" people have slaughtered one another, have stoned their prophets and have burned their heretic-heroes at the stake. On the other hand, an act which accidentally turns out well has no moral virtue in it; nor is an act sinful if, when done from a good motive, it has bad consequences which no one could possibly foresee. The automobilist who takes unnecessary risks does wrong whatever the outcome; the careful driver is guiltless if an accident occurs which could not be foreseen or obviated. The moral quality of any act depends upon the purposes which prompt it, but these purposes must themselves be judged in the light of what contributes most to the general good.

Sin and goodness then both have to do with the choice of one's course of action. An act is good which aims to promote the highest possible degree of human welfare; an act is evil which tends toward the opposite result. "Human welfare" is of course a broad term, and it would require a lengthy dissertation on ethical theory to analyze fully the criteria by which to judge it. We shall use it in a synthetic sense to mean the highest development of the personality of every individual—a greater chance for happiness, for bodily comfort and well-being, for intellectual pursuits, for spiritual growth, for character building, for all that goes to make up a happy, useful, rounded life. He sins who thwarts this development in himself or

others, or who fails to strive for this goal as fully as he might.

The old Greek word for sin means to "miss the mark." In this our early fathers glimpsed a great idea. For put in modern phraseology, this means that to sin is to miss the greater good that should be chosen —to choose a low ideal when a higher ideal is beckoning. Nor need this low ideal be intrinsically bad to make us miss the mark—the good is often enemy to the best. We are but stating another phase of the same idea when we say that all sin is selfishness, for to be selfish is to live on the plane of the lower, narrower self instead of letting our conduct be ruled by the higher self that loves and serves. All of life is a quest for values of some sort, and all good and evil must be ultimately measured in terms of the kind of values chosen. To sin is to choose the lesser good.

If we say that to sin is to transgress the law of God, then we merely reach the same conclusion by a different path. It is the law of God, written in the structure of human nature, that "we needs must love the highest when we see it." This is another way of saying that it is our moral task to grow "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." The law of God is to be read most clearly, not from tablets of stone or from sacred books, but from the lives of men—supremely from the life of the Supreme Man of Nazareth. Whatever lifts the level of human life and makes personality richer and finer is good, and God-

like. Whatever degrades life and makes us less like God is evil. To sin is willfully to choose to be ungodlike.

2. *Does the devil make us sin?*

Our fathers believed that God made man sinless, and that into the idyllic purity of Eden came the Tempter speaking words of enticement to our first parents—leading them to taste forbidden fruits and opening their eyes to the unholy allurements with which this world abounds. The sin thus fastened upon the world by Adam and Eve and the serpent has long been regarded as a curse passed on by inheritance to each new generation so that "we are conceived in iniquity and born in sin."

As we have noted, modern psychology and modern theology, with a truer reading of the teachings of Jesus, have gone far toward banishing the doctrine of original sin and its corollary of inherited guilt. But there is still a rather widespread belief that when a person sins, it is the devil that tempts him. It behooves us to inquire what the devil is, if there is one. Is he a real person—as real a person as God?

The author has no desire to snatch a cherished belief in His Satanic Majesty away from anyone who has a particular attachment for him, or can find a good reason for his existence. But if the function of the devil is merely to be a sort of scape-goat upon whom to blame our sins, perhaps it is time to stop "passing

the buck"! The tendency to shift responsibility to the shoulders of another is as old as time. In the past men blamed their sins upon Adam and Eve and the devil, as now upon Society. It is a truer statement of the facts and a worthier incentive to moral effort to recognize that neither Satan nor Society but *we ourselves* are primarily responsible for our sins.

Let us consider the evidence for the devil pro and con, taking first the affirmative. Two considerations here emerge: (1) Biblical references, (2) the testimony of those who have an inner feeling that they are being tempted by a diabolical power. The currency of the belief as a part of our social inheritance is based, for the most part, on imagery which varies widely in its sources—from potted ham to Paradise Lost. Milton has done more than the Bible to fasten the belief upon our thinking. It cannot be denied that if one is going to interpret the Bible literally, he finds there the devil. But it must be observed that an equally literal rendering would give us various uncongenial concepts, for instance polytheism and polygamy. To the Old Testament Hebrews there was no incongruity in the thought that the devil should take the form of a talking serpent, or (as stated in an adjacent passage) that the "sons of God" should marry the daughters of men and beget giants. (Genesis 6: 2-4.) The modern mind finds difficulty in regarding either as an accurate statement of historical fact. It must be noted also that Satan emerges into prominence in the

Bible only in the post-exilic writings, after the Hebrews through their captivity in Babylon had come in contact with Persian dualism and had doubtless been influenced by the Zoroastrian belief in a devil warring against God and contending with him for the souls of men. The contest over Job reflects this influence. In the story of Jesus' temptations, we must take our choice between a literal devil and the belief that Jesus was tempted, as we are, by the allurements of a lesser good. Modern thought tends to regard the wilderness experience as an inner struggle in which Jesus faced two opposing courses—the short, easy road to popularity and political prestige, and the longer, harder way of the cross and spiritual conquest—and facing the issue chose the latter.

As for the introspective evidence of the devil's power, this cannot be taken as proof of his personal existence. It indicates certainly that there are opposing forces within each individual, with the result that "the evil that I would not that I do." But psychology finds no need of a devil to explain these pulls. Our uncurbed instincts, our evil habits, our subconscious longings for what our moral sense forbids—these unite to make the lesser good, the evil course, appear alluring. Psychology, to be sure, does not disprove the reality of a devil, for psychology asks no question about the metaphysical cause of what appears in consciousness. But psychology has at least made the devil unnecessary as the source of our temptations.

Turning to the negative side of the sheet, we find an argument against the devil in the very fact that he is useless. There is no need of assuming that there is a devil if all the facts of temptation can be explained without him. And they can be. What we have called the temptings of the devil can be accounted for in terms of man's freedom and the influence of our instincts, habits and subconscious urges. Professor Hadfield in his *Psychology and Morals* points out that every temptation is *endopsychic,* that is, from within the mind.[1] Nothing tempts us unless we let it. Tempting objects there are in plenty without; they become temptations just in the proportion that uncurbed instincts or unworthy ideals within us give them lodgment. The instinctive life is not bad in itself: uncurbed it leads us into many sins. Acquisitiveness, pugnacity, sex, self-assertion—each has its accompanying galaxy of sins. The mania for self-indulgence is the modern Mephistopheles. Our instinctive drives and habit patterns may be good servants or cruel masters.

Other difficulties in the devil-idea entangle us if we try to think it through. For how did there come to be a devil, if there is one? Is he a fallen angel, as Milton portrays him? But when God thrust him out of heaven, why did he not further curtail the power of so dangerous a rival? Did God create the devil to war against himself and thwart his plans? This seems

[1] *Op. cit.,* p. 39.

hardly plausible. Or did something else create him? If so, what? Here we hit a blank wall. Did some other power create both God and the devil, and set them contending against each other? Such a power would be more powerful than God—a sort of super-God, and the prospect gets bewildering. A stark mystery confronts us when we raise the question of where the devil came from, if he exists.

To meet the question by saying that the devil, like God, is eternally self-existent, is merely to plunge us in new difficulties. Such a view makes the world not a universe but a "duo-verse," a realm in which not unity but duality is regnant. This is the view of the religion of Zoroaster, and of much uncritical thought. "Dualism is the theory that there are two powers in the world and it is as if they were always fighting a duel," so runs a student's definition. This is not far from the ordinary conception of God's relation to the devil. But intelligent religious faith and the philosopher's demand for unity lead alike to the conclusion that a unitary power, whatever this power be called, must be the source of the world. To deny this unity is to call in question the grounds for belief in monotheism, for there cannot be one God and two supreme contending powers.

The question often arises at this point as to whether, if we reject belief in a personal devil, we have any more right to believe in a personal God. Is not one as unnecessary as the other? The answer here in-

volves all the evidence examined in Chapter VI. We found there that experience points to the belief in God with a probability that is almost certainty. Yet neither the existence, nor the unity, nor the rationality, nor the purposeful progress of the world requires a devil. Neither human personality, nor religious experience, nor the belief that the values of life are grounded in a more-than-human power vanishes if a personal devil be non-existent. The belief in a devil can be surrendered without intellectual loss or personal regret, and such is not the case with belief in God. What can be relinquished without being missed cannot be very fundamental to religion.

Nor need we be afraid that if we lose the devil, there will no longer be anything to fight! There is no less incentive to moral battle if the devil be replaced by human nature and its processes, or the fear of the devil and his domain by an intelligent knowledge of the causes and effects of evil-doing. To be sure, psychological knowledge alone will not make people good. It takes the personal dynamic of a *desire* for goodness to do this, and the business of chasing the devil away did afford, negatively, such a dynamic. But there is an equally strong dynamic, wider in its scope, more enduring in its effects, in an intelligent positive love of goodness and love of our fellow-men. When we have learned to put the responsibility for our own sin squarely on our own shoulders, there will be less sin. When we have learned to reconstruct society by

removing the causes that beget temptation, we shall have a better social order. There are diabolical powers in plenty yet to be overcome.

3. *Is there any free will?*

Throughout the whole history of philosophy and theology people have wrangled over the question of free will. In general, the idealistic philosophies have asserted that the human spirit must be in some sense free, while materialistic philosophies have denied this freedom. Theology has clung tenaciously to the belief that man is a "free moral agent" while at the same time often asserting a doctrine of predestination which, taken at its face value, would rigidly circumscribe man's acts. The problem, though complex, is too fundamental to be dodged.

We have seen that the possibility of moral or immoral action depends upon the power of choice. If all one's acts are set and predetermined (either by the structure of the material world or by the will of God) in such fashion that it is impossible to act other than one does, quite obviously freedom disappears. With the power of voluntary choice goes moral responsibility. One cannot consciously choose to be good, nor choose to seek after God, unless he has the power to choose not to do so. No moral quality attaches to my failure to steal the million dollars that is outside my reach, but stealing becomes a moral question with me when I have to decide whether to tell the store clerk

he has given me too much change. Likewise if I am "foreordained" to be saved or damned there is not much use of my doing anything about my fate. If I have no freedom, I am not responsible for my acts.

Theological determinism, or predestination, is a cardinal doctrine of Mohammedanism. Islam means "submission" (to the will of Allah) and a Moslem is "one who submits"—to the fatalistic decrees of an arbitrary deity. Christian theology in its earlier forms regarded God as equally peremptory (though more ethical) in his decrees. Through the influence of illustrious Christian theologians, notably Paul, Augustine and Calvin, the doctrine of predestination has profoundly influenced Christian thinking. While God's omnipotence has thus been emphasized, God's freedom has been exalted at the expense of man's, and the most inhuman acts have been glossed over as arising from the will of God. But happily the doctrine of predestination is disappearing, at least in its application to evils that are obviously preventable.

Some still hold that when the typhoid victim dies from lack of proper sanitation, it happened because it was "to be." There is a good deal of illogical comfort in such a view. But not many, even of the most rigorous of Calvinists, would now say that if a man gets drunk and shoots his family, it is the will of God that he should do so!

But while theological determinism is on the wane,

mechanistic determinism is with us still.[2] This is usually, though not necessarily, linked with naturalism, and holds that every so-called choice is inevitably determined by its place in an unvarying chain of cause and effect relations. It is a major implication of behaviorism. As we have already noted, it tends to nullify the sense of sin by making all wrong-doing the result of physical causes or social maladjustment.

There is enough evidence for determinism to make it look very plausible. It must be granted that our freedom is much more limited than is commonly supposed. Nobody is wholly free. I cannot at this moment will (with any hope of fulfillment) to be a thousand miles away, or to live a hundred years hence. I might like to be another Milton, but it would be as futile for me to will to write a *Paradise Lost* as to will to be reincarnated in the seventeenth century. It is impossible for me to will anything totally outside the range of my experience. If I had never heard of Europe I should not want to go there; if I had never heard of a radio, I should have no desire to "listen in."

[2] Mechanistic determinism on the basis of the absolute uniformity of law in physical nature is being surrendered in some degree by scientists as a result of recent discoveries, particularly those included in the quantum theory. Cf. A. S. Eddington, "Physics is no longer pledged to a scheme of deterministic law. . . . Science thereby withdraws its moral opposition to free-will. Those who maintain a deterministic theory of mental activity must do so as the outcome of their study of the mind itself and not with the idea that they are thereby making it more conformable with our experimental knowledge of the laws of inorganic nature." *The Nature of the Physical World,* pp. 294, 295.

All my present choices are linked up with the past. Every act and every thought, no matter how apparently trivial, tends to project its influence into later acts and thoughts. This means that my present character is an outgrowth of my previous conduct. I may under a sufficiently strong incentive "turn over a new leaf" and may receive forgiveness for my sins, but all my former misdeeds have left their scars.

Obviously my environment conditions in large measure the nature of my choices. My interests and my acts, for the most part, follow the pattern of the social milieu in which I have been reared. If I spend most of my years (and particularly my early, most impressionable years), in an environment where negroes are frowned upon, I grow up a "nigger-hater." Whether I am now a religious or an irreligious person depends principally upon the nature of my previous religious contacts.

Likewise heredity plays its part in the limitation of our freedom. Biologically speaking, it is of course untrue that "all men are created equal." Not only are some born morons and others geniuses, but some are born weak-willed and others strong-willed. Innate characteristics tending to result in hot tempers or cheerful dispositions, as in artistic ability or mathematical genius, are now commonly believed by biologists to be inheritable.

Experience shows that my present self is in large measure, and perhaps wholly, conditioned by my pre-

vious experience, my environment, my heredity. Does this mean then that I have no freedom? Here lies the crux of the problem. The determinist says yes; the believer in free will says no.

It would be futile to try to give an adequate answer in a page to the knottiest problem in philosophy—a problem that has puzzled philosophers since the very dawn of speculative thought. We can only hint at a solution.

The answer hinges upon the nature of the self which results from this interplay of forces. If the self is a mechanical thing, determined solely by the structure of the nervous system and its physical changes, my present choices are not really choices at all—they are the powerless resultant of forces over which I have no control. But if the self is active—if (to use Wundt's term) the self is the *creative resultant* of heredity, environment and experience, then I still am free to act, to choose, to rise above my heredity, to remake my environment, to use my past experience as a stepping stone to higher achievements.

The author believes that experience vindicates the truth of the latter conclusion. It is of minor consequence whether the theory be called determinism or freedom, provided it be recognized that the resultant self is active and creative. Freedom of the will is not to be regarded as something wholly *unrelated to* previous events, but neither are acts of will to be regarded as wholly *determined by* these previous events. The

will is simply the self in action, and the self is no inert, mechanically determined thing—it is living, dynamic, creative. It is capable of forming ends—of projecting its own inactivity into the future as purposes and ideals. It is the pull of the future rather than the push of the past which most truly determines the nature of our choices.

The possibility of choice in the light of ideals is constantly revealed in our every-day experience. To be sure, there are some things one cannot bring himself to do because his ideals condemn them so utterly as to restrict the power of will. Probably not many of the readers of this book would find it possible to point a revolver at a neighbor and shoot him down in cold blood. But when it is a question of hurting the neighbor's reputation by gossip—it is by no means so impossible. Throughout the vast range of our every-day relations we must ever keep saying "I will" or "I won't." To be or not to be? To do or not to do? Choices must be made at every turn, and it is the active self, the creative resultant of all the past acting in the light of its ideals, which does the choosing.

Freedom of the will is not a vanished phantom of a superstitious age. But this freedom is not unrestrained or isolated. It arises in the functioning of an active, conscious, creative self. Within limits one is free to think, to act, to shape his own destiny and to mold the social order. It is important to recognize our social interrelatedness and the limitations placed upon our freedom by the world of men and things.

But it is even more important to recognize that in a very real sense each individual is the master of his fate. If one believes that the world as a whole is God-given and God-sustained, he may regard both his limitations and his freedom as gifts of the divine.

4. *Why does God let men sin?*

The question of man's freedom and his moral responsibility lies at the heart of the problem of man's relation to God and to his moral task. Moral freedom, defined in the terms outlined above, means that within limits man has power to choose between right and wrong, and that therefore he is responsible for choosing the good. If God has created man with this high attribute of moral freedom, he must have had a good purpose in so doing. Yet nothing is commoner than the sin which arises from a misuse of this freedom. Have God's plans been thwarted?

We can scarcely believe that God wants men to sin. In fact we find most of the religions of the world (and Christianity above all others) insisting that God demands righteousness in men. "What doth Jehovah require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and thy neighbor as thyself." Because of this insistent ethical note, Christianity has been loath to impute to God any responsibility for sin. The tendency to blame Adam or the devil has been due quite as much to a desire to protect the reputation

of God as to shift the responsibility away from the person who sins.

But just as we must shoulder our own responsibility for sin, so we must recognize that the existence of sin in a God-directed universe cannot be accounted for by leaving out God. We must inquire why a good God lets men sin.

If we believe in God's creativity and man's free will, the question can be answered. As we saw in considering the problem of suffering, the good or evil of any act depends upon the purpose it expresses. If God has a good and loving purpose in creating men with the power of moral choice, his act is good.

It is conceivable that God might have made us incapable of sin. He might have made us automata that could act only as we were forced to act. My automobile does my bidding—if I run it into the ditch it is not the fault of the automobile. It cannot sin. God might have made us equally mechanical—equally plastic to his will. Man's genius has devised no infallible automobile, but God in his power and wisdom *might* have devised an infallible race of men. But would we have wanted him to? Would we want to be good little puppets making our bows to the world like marionettes upon a string? Such an arrangement of automatic goodness might save us a deal of inconvenience, but it would rob us of what is most worth while in life. It would rob us of our chance to choose the good, to struggle upward, to "follow the gleam."

Most of us, if given our choice, would prefer life as it is, with all its moral battles, to a life of automatic goodness. The universe, as Keats has put it, is "a vale of soul-making." Rugged souls cannot be made without struggle. God wants us to achieve our goodness—not to have it thrust upon us. Moral fibre can be developed only through exercise. Just as no child in his growth to manhood ever attained stamina of character without being permitted to make choices for himself, so no moral manhood can be achieved without the power to *choose* our goodness—without the power to sin or not to sin. The ladder by which man climbs upward must also be one by which he may go down. If God's purpose in man's creation was to develop a race of moral giants—a race of men "climbing through the darkness up to God"—his purpose could be achieved only by the possibility that all along the way this purpose might be thwarted by man's sin.

The problem of the relation of man's freedom to God's omnipotence has been touched upon in the previous chapter. If God lets men sin, and at the same time hates sin and wants men to be good, it is impossible to say that God's power is totally unlimited. But if God has voluntarily limited his own power in order to give men the power to make choices and achieve goodness, he is still omnipotent in the sense that he is not limited by any power which does not arise from his own will. If God's power were limited by the devil, or by physical nature, or even by a self-existent moral

capacity in man, we should have a dualism instead of a universe, and with it the possibility that God might be defeated in the struggle. If God is self-limited, the situation is quite otherwise, and there is ground for an ultimate confidence. "The God of moral optimism must be absolutely sufficient in power for man's imperative religious needs, including his need of triumph over physical death. This is the practical meaning of omnipotence." [3] Much of the moral dynamic of religion rests on its confidence that man in his moral strivings is working with an all-powerful God whose purposes are long purposes—purposes that will eventuate both in the setting up of a heavenly kingdom in this life and the continuance of man's moral task beyond the grave.[4]

God lets men sin, not because it is his will that men should work iniquity, but because it is his will that they should not. Our richest gift, the power to obey the will of God, entails upon us the responsibility to use that gift with wisdom and devotion. The possibility of sin is itself an incentive to goodness. As the fact of our social interrelatedness is a challenge to banish the social evils productive of sin and suffering, so our relationship to God affords a mighty challenge to live as sons of God. God reveals himself in the moral life of men, and it is our task and privilege to follow the gleam.

[3] D. C. Macintosh, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, p. 77. Chapters III-VIII of this volume give an excellent presentation of the place of moral optimism in the philosophical foundations of religion.

[4] Cf. Ch. XII, Secs. 2, 5.

CHAPTER XI

PRAYER

It is with some trepidation that the author attempts to discuss the problem of prayer. The life of prayer is its own best justification. To the person who prays and feels himself lifted by the experience into the presence of the Eternal, prayer is not a "problem." A psychological or philosophical analysis of the experience is likely to appear to him, not merely futile, but sacrilegious. On the other hand, the person to whom prayer has no vital personal meaning is not likely to be convinced by any amount of speculative argument.

Yet consideration of the problem is forced upon us by the fact that a great many people would sincerely like to pray—used to pray, perhaps, and are sorely puzzled to know whether they have any intellectual right to do so in a world of law. We have learned a good deal about auto-suggestion in recent years, and the suspicion lurks in many minds that prayer is that, and nothing else. *The Life of Prayer in a World of Science,* so runs the title of an excellent book upon the problem,[1] and the very title suggests the dilemma of

[1] By William Adams Brown, Association Press, 1927. This is probably the most comprehensive recent treatment.

the person who would like to be both prayerful and scientific, and wonders whether he can.

1. *What is prayer?*

Then what is this act, so vital to religion? Certainly not a mere repetition of words or formulæ. No amount of *Pater Nosters,* or mumbled collects, or platitudinous phrases, is prayer. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom." The parrot-like saying of words—even of good words, like those which Jesus taught his disciples—is not prayer, but muscular exercise. This would be too obvious to mention, were not this substitution made in all but the rarest of religious services.

Nor is prayer to be identified with meditation upon lofty themes. High thoughts are good, but not all high thoughts are thoughts of the Most High. There is value in communing with one's self—in taking stock of one's moral assets and liabilities and staking out new moral enterprises—but this is not identical with the process of communing with an Other.

Nor is prayer merely æsthetic or emotional exaltation. Prayer ought to inspire, but not all inspiration is prayer. The symphony or the sunset may lift us into the presence of God, or it may leave us untouched with any sense of cosmic meaning.

Nor is prayer identical with worthful activity. "Honest toil is praise and prayer," sings the poet. It

is certain that honest toil is good; it is equally certain that much of it is done in a spirit that is neither praise nor prayer.

Nor can prayer be literally defined as "the soul's sincere desire," for every soul has many sincere longings—some worthy, some unworthy—which are far removed from the spirit of worship. Just as religion touches every aspect of life, yet is not the whole of life; so prayer, religion's most characteristic expression, is concerned with every phase of life yet has a specific function of its own.

The commonest words are often hardest to define. As we shall use the term, prayer is man's attempt to become consciously aware of the presence of God. We shall not try to differentiate it sharply from worship or mystical experience, of which it is a phase. Prayer may be "uttered or unexpressed." It may be mingled with intellectual, or æsthetic, or emotional experience. It may be the outgrowth of action, or its incentive, or its accompaniment. It takes as many forms as there are different temperaments and avenues of expression. But whenever one tries in a vital, personal outreach of spirit to find God, he prays.

Note that we say "whenever one *tries* to find God." The attainment may be vague and shadowy, for temperaments differ greatly in their capacity for mystical experience, and there is no cause for discouragement if one's own religious experience is not that of another.

One may sit on the mourner's bench, or whatever constitutes its modern counterpart—perhaps a cushioned couch in a college room or camp chair at a summer conference—and eagerly desire an experience of God without any very striking results. Such thwarted efforts often breed disdain of the whole process. The trouble usually lies in the fact that one is expecting some sort of spectacular religious fire-works—something foreign to his temperament and habits of thought. The Spirit may have come to the disciples on the day of Pentecost with cloven tongues of fire: it comes that way no longer. One will do better to look for God in the still, small voice—in new integration of spirit and poise of soul—than in any flamboyant revelation.

In the very act of seeking, there is in some sense a finding. As Josiah Royce put it, "We seek. That is a fact. We seek a city still out of sight. In contrast with this goal, we live. But if this be so, then we already possess something of Being even in our finite seeking. For the readiness to seek is already something of an attainment." [2] The manner of attainment will be so conditioned by what manner of person the seeker is—what his experience has been and where his major interests lie—that no neat formula can be given. Any sincere and reverent attempt to open up a channel of communication between the pray-er and his God, is prayer, and any such sincere attempt meets some measure of attainment.

[2] *The World and the Individual,* Vol. I, p. 10.

2. *Is it worth while to pray?*

Without a real God, or at least a God believed to be real, there can be no prayer.[3] Conversely, without prayer, there can be no vital awareness of the reality of God. This is a fact of tremendous practical importance, for it goes far toward explaining the decadence of religious faith. Most college students and others who lose (or think they lose) their faith in God, really lose a sense of God's presence through neglect of worship. God is crowded out through indifference far more often than pushed out through intellectual rejection. In fact, the former is often a stepping-stone to the latter, for when God has been shut out from life, a long step has been taken toward the conclusion that God is non-existent.

Is prayer worth while? If one wishes to possess a sense of God's reality, or if he wishes open-mindedly to test the validity of religion for life, he can ill afford to neglect the practice which will give him the largest degree of evidence. Whoever would know the truth about religion must let religion bear its fruits. One does not gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles; neither does one gather religious experience from indifference, nor religious certainty from scorn.[4]

The prayer experience of humanity seems sufficiently to attest its value. Yet various charges are raised, not

[3] There is disagreement on this point. It raises an important question which will be discussed in the next section.

[4] See Brightman, *Religious Values,* for an excellent treatment of the relation of worship to religious belief.

only against prayers of petition for specific things but against the general practice. It is said that prayer is useless; that it is merely self-hypnosis; that it engenders an effeminate, cowardly attitude; that it is an anti-social practice stifling worthier efforts for social betterment. In a word, that we need no longer "work and pray," but only work. Let us look for a moment at each of these charges.

Prayer is said to be useless. Some things, certainly, people pray for and do not get. Our fathers used to pray for rain. It is doubtful whether the Almighty ever deviated from his orderly meteorological processes in response to their request. Rain continues to fall alike on the just and the unjust. We still offer a great many glorified rain petitions, and there may be as little prospect that the external order of events will be changed thereby.

Yet people keep on praying. The persistence of the practice is a sheer mystery unless it has been found useful, for the non-useful perishes. People sometimes pray from habit, sometimes from social suggestion, but fundamentally from a sense of need. The habit would not persist; the social custom would not be followed—indeed, there would be no such custom—unless people felt that in the experience some benefit was attained.

And what is this benefit? However the case may stand in regard to the efficacy of prayer in physical nature, certain benefits are undeniable. Out of the experience of prayer comes moral strength. From it

comes peace of mind in the midst of sorrow. From it comes a sense of sin and challenge to new effort. From it comes a renewal and intensification of love and gratitude. From it comes new hope and a sense of confidence in a cosmic order.

Yet these are effects within the individual who prays. Are they not merely subjective effects? Are they not self-induced, a form of self-hypnosis? This question is so fundamental that we shall devote a section to it, and therefore shall not pause long with it here. But in considering whether it is worth while to pray, it is important to notice first that these subjective effects are real values—not chimeras; and second, that we should not get them unless we believed the process to be more than self-hypnosis. The most important thing any individual can do is to rule his own spirit, and if prayer will help him to rule his spirit it is not to be despised. To reinforce the inner life of a man so that he can transcend external events is more needful than to alter the external events. And this inner reinforcement comes only to him who believes that a real God really comes into his life and gives new power.

But, someone objects, why go to God for this reinforcement? Why not stand on your own feet? Self-reliance is a worthy note; it is an integral element of all robust character. If prayer with its implied reliance upon God really makes us weak or effeminate or cowardly, we must be cautious. To some tempera-

ments, the resolute daring and sturdy self-confidence expressed in Henley's *Invictus* has a great appeal:

"Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

. . . .

"It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul."

There is much that is admirable in such a spirit. But in practical living it has some limitations. The first is that people who pride themselves on their self-reliance are often very uncoöperative persons, hard to live with! Stoicism, with all its merits, has always been but a step removed from cynicism. It is well to be strong-willed and self-reliant: it is well also to avoid the pitfalls of pharisaic pride.

The second point to notice (and this is more pertinent to the question of prayer) is that nobody lives a fully self-reliant life. Nobody does, or can, live to himself alone. We have seen how intimately our intertwining social relations affect the problem of evil. Rare indeed is the person who does not seek comfort in sorrow and inspiration for effort in the companionship of other human friends. Yet he is not called cowardly if he does; he is called anti-social (even "queer") if he does not. If it is not an evidence of weakness

to seek help from other human individuals, neither is it to seek help from God.

It is sometimes urged that the mystic's search for God is anti-social—we are bidden to get off our knees and go serve humanity. But to one who views the matter without prejudice there can be little doubt that prayer is a powerful incentive to the service of one's fellow-men. One cannot pray for the good of his neighbor, *and mean it,* without feeling impelled to do something to help his neighbor. It is easy enough to say "Thy kingdom come" in parrot fashion without the kingdom's being advanced thereby, either externally or within. But when one really *prays* for the advancement of the kingdom, he works for it.

It is easy also to cite instances of selfish prayers, and to point to people who "enjoy religion" while indifferent to crying social needs. But it does not follow from this that the people who do not pray are more altruistic than those who do. Ordinarily, the person who experiences the presence of God is inspired to more zealous service of society than humanitarian motives alone would urge him to. Far from being anti-social, the mystic's vision is one of the most potent social influences in life. "Saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs" and a host of others have found in the assurance of the divine presence a moral dynamic to lay down their lives in making this a fairer world.

We are not suggesting that prayer be made a substitute for action. To try to make it a substitute for

work is not prayer; it is blasphemy. God expects us to work out our own salvation, and as much as we can of our neighbor's. We have no right to expect that everything we pray for will happen automatically: God will not do our work for us while we loaf. But if prayer is not a substitute for work, neither is work a substitute for prayer. It is worth while to pray.

3. *Is prayer objective?*

No question in regard to prayer is more commonly asked than the one usually expressed in the words, "Isn't it all psychological?" The person who asks the question does not mean exactly this; he means "Is it not all subjective?" He means to raise the question as to whether prayer is not wholly a matter of auto-suggestion, the subjective effects in the pray-er being induced solely by psychologically analyzable forces within the nature of the individual. In short, whether God has anything to do with it.

Before we can answer the question we must be sure we understand our terms. The difference between a psychological and a philosophical approach to the problem is very important. Confusion on this point has wrought much havoc.

The psychology of prayer, like the psychology of reasoning or imagination or any other form of mental activity, is a purely scientific study. As a science, it aims to do what every other science does: (1) describe and analyze the data given by experience, (2) discover

and state the cause and effect relations observable within these data. Like any other science, again, it raises no question of metaphysical ultimates, either to affirm or to deny. One may study astronomy and be concerned solely with the nature and relations of the heavenly bodies, raising no question as to whether God created them. To ask the latter is important for religion and life, but it lies outside the province of science. So in a scientific study of the psychology of prayer, the psychologist is not concerned with the problem as to whether it does any good to pray—not even with the question as to whether *God does anything* when we pray. The only question that concerns him, as a scientist, is what happens in my consciousness when I pray and how the various acts of consciousness involved are related to each other. His study is empirical, not metaphysical.

The procedure of the scientist, whether in the field of astronomy or prayer, is entirely legitimate. Only by this procedure can he get any exact data. The only mistake, or misfortune, arises when it is assumed that this scientific study covers the whole territory. The field of meaning and value on the one hand, of ultimate origins on the other, lies outside the scientist's domain. The heavens declare the glory of God; the firmament showeth his handiwork—this is just as important (vastly more important for the rank and file of folk) than to know the size of Betelgeuse. Questions of meaning and value and ultimate origins lie in

the province of philosophy. One can be scientific without philosophy: one cannot *live* without it.

So the study of the psychology of prayer, legitimate and valuable as it is, drives us back to philosophy. Here we have a right to ask whether it does any good to pray and whether God does anything about it. Questions of psychology and philosophy are here more closely intertwined than in any other field, for what we believe about God will condition the possibility and manner of our praying. The size of Betelgeuse is what it is and will be so recorded, whether the astronomer be atheist or theist. The content of my consciousness when I pray—if I pray at all—will be vastly different if I believe God non-existent.

This raises the question as to whether an experience of prayer is possible to a non-believer. Professor Wright in his *Student's Philosophy of Religion* says it is. "People prayed before the idea of a divine being of any sort had occurred to them. People would continue to pray if that belief were to pass away." [5] I have known a few persons, whose testimony I must respect, who claim to be atheists and yet continue to pray. To be more exact, they "meditate on the Infinite." Here, I think, is the clue to the situation. One may meditate, and feel inspired; one may go through the accustomed practices of prayer, and association of ideas will carry over some sense of subjective exaltation. "The music and the atmosphere (of

[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 278.

worship) give rise to the old familiar emotions." [6] But without some belief in a God who will in some way respond, "prayer becomes a farce." And not many with a sense of intellectual honesty will long continue it.

If the subjective effects of prayer be all there is of prayer, these effects must themselves soon vanish. As Professor Pratt remarks, "If the subjective value of prayer be all the value it has, we wise psychologists of religion had best keep the fact to ourselves: otherwise the game will soon be up and we shall have no religion left to psychologize about. We shall have killed the goose that laid our golden egg." [7]

And what grounds are there for believing that prayer is objective? The question is tied up with the whole problem as to whether there is a God at all. The arguments for and against the divine existence have been traversed laboriously in Chapters V to VIII, and if the reader is not convinced, nothing we could add here would be effective. It should be emphasized, however, that if God is both good and powerful, as religion conceives him, it is irrational to suppose that he does not do anything when we pray. A personal God who is interested in the welfare of human folks, and is able to help them, cannot be indifferent to the prayers of those who seek his aid. A deistic God on the fringes of time and space might will the creation of humanity in the mass and give no heed to individuals. An im-

[6] Letter quoted, *supra*, p. 76.
[7] *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 336.

manent loving Father has a care for the needs of his children. "He is not far from each one of us, for in him we live and move and have our being."

Certain objections to the objectivity of prayer will be considered in the next section. Before we pass to these, it should be clear that the problem is not identical with the question as to whether God effects changes in external physical nature in response to prayer. It is conceivable that the only thing God does when I pray is to change my mental attitude.[8] Nevertheless God does *something:* and he does the most important thing that could be done. If he gives me new courage and insight and power, I can remake external circumstance or I can submit uncrushed.

4. *Are there valid objections to prayer?* [9]

As we consider the objections most commonly raised against prayer, we shall mean principally objections to the objectivity of prayer. It may safely be assumed that, save for certain minor objections already considered, everybody grants the subjective effects of prayer to be good.

(1) "God ought to give us what we need without asking." Prayer is a problem to many minds because to believe in prayer seems to imply that God begrudges

[8] Further implications of this problem are discussed in sections 5 and 6.

[9] The remainder of the chapter borrows heavily from the unpublished notes of a course in Religious Values given by Professor Brightman in Boston University.

his favors, and changes his mind upon request. The question often arises, "If God is wise and good and loving, as religion assumes, then why should we need to pray?"

The question appears legitimate enough, but it rests on a false assumption as to the nature and purpose of prayer. Prayer is not begging from God; it is co-operating with God.[10] To pray means to give God an opportunity to work in me. To quote a famous old saying, "Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance but laying hold of God's willingness." Just at this point lies the difference (or one difference) between religion and magic. Magic tries to coerce the divine powers: religion aims to coöperate through spiritual fellowship. Magic juggles: religion prays.

God respects human freedom. A God who did everything for us whether we willed it or not would be treating us like things instead of persons. My typewriter has to do what I make it do. It makes mistakes because I make them. If it needs a new ribbon it cannot tell me so; it cannot refuse to accept it if I choose to give it one. God *might* have made us as mechanical as typewriters. But he did not, and we are glad.

God wants us to *choose* our goodness, not have it thrust upon us. The student who goes to college because he is forced to go does not appreciate the gift of an education nor get great value from it. We must

[10] This does not deny the legitimacy of petitions for specific things. See *infra,* Sec. 6.

be willing to accept God's spiritual gifts before we can receive. "Ask, and ye shall receive"—for in the asking there is preparation for receiving. And in the asking there is already some measure of receiving. Knock, and the door stands ready to be opened; but it is not flung open against my will.

(2) "It would happen anyway."

The form in which this objection is put usually links it with the problem of the fixity of natural law. "If things are going to happen anyway according to fixed natural laws, what is the use of praying?" so the question runs.

The question of natural law opens up an area so large that we shall again have to ask the reader to defer till a later section some of the deeper phases of the problem.[11] But some things can be said, as we pass, in answer to this query.

One is that a great many things are observed to happen through human willing that would not otherwise happen; yet they violate no law of nature. When I ask my class to hand me term papers two weeks hence, I set them to doing things that otherwise would not happen. But the skies do not cave in. No law of physics or physiology or psychology is violated. Books are drawn from the library, brows are wrinkled, pens are pushed, some degree of cerebration takes place, and finally the finished product is presented, without the violation of a single law. If we will transfer this

[11] *Infra,* Sec. 5.

patent fact to the field of prayer, it becomes evident that it is quite possible to ask of God and to receive from God without setting aside any law of nature. Man uses law to effect his purposes; God is less powerful than man if he cannot also use law to achieve his purposes and grant good gifts to those who ask of him.

Another thing that should be said on this point is that we have no right to ask God to violate a law of nature. If one were to jump from a fortieth story window and ask God to enact a miracle to save his life on the way down, he would be guilty both of foolhardiness and blasphemy. When a certain great man was tempted to make a cheap display of power by casting himself from the temple pinnacle, he replied, "Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God." Neither have we a right today to "make trial" of God by expecting him to set aside his orderly ways of working in response to our requests.

Empirically it is difficult to draw the line between what "would happen anyway" and what happens as a result of prayer. It is well to be cautious about claiming remarkable answers to prayer. When one prays for money and gets a check next morning that started on its way a week before, the chances are that the check would have arrived without the prayer. The habit of some pious souls of seeing answers to prayer in every petty event has done not a little to discredit its validity in the eyes of the more "tough-minded." Yet this ought not to blind us to the fact that in mani-

fold instances prayer causes things to happen—causes them to happen *at least* through a changed attitude in the individual, and perhaps also through a change in the world of things.

(3) "God could not pay attention to each insignificant individual."

The horizons of our universe have greatly enlarged in recent years. We know now that we dwell in a universe made up of countless heavenly bodies—whether habitable or not—and that our little planet is but a tiny fragment in the vast scheme of things. And even if our earth be the only portion of this vast universe that the Creator has peopled with living beings, there are countless millions of us here. How then can God pay attention to the petty petitions of each insignificant human person?

> "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
> The moon and the stars which thou hast ordained;
> What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
> And the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

With less poetic rapture, usually with less devotion to the creator of the whole, the modern mind stands humbled and puzzled before this vastness, and affirming its own littleness, declares it is irrational to suppose that God cares for *me*, or my petitions.

This objection has a very strong hold upon the imagination. Even when answered logically, it is likely to persist. Perhaps the best way to banish it, if we wish to do so, is to let the Psalmist continue to speak for us.

"Thou hast made him but little lower than God,
And crownest him with glory and honor."

A sense of the vastness of the universe ought to make us humble: more than that, it ought to make us humbly appreciative of the greatness of the human spirit that can compass it. A mind that can construct a telescope and read the secrets of the stars is a vastly greater creation than the whole realm of inanimate material things. If God cares for this earth of ours enough to keep it whirling steadily in its orbit, there is much more reason to suppose he cares for the living souls he has made to dwell upon it.

We can hardly suppose that God judges value by size. Even in our human judgments we know better than to do this. No mother would think her baby of little consequence because it is tiny! It is to surrender to an unreasonable worship of bigness to suppose that God cares less for human beings because they occupy little space in a vast material universe.

Nor have we a right in the matter of numbers to place human limitations upon God and suppose that he cannot care for each separate individual. In our childhood, we learned of a certain old woman who lived in a shoe and had so many children she did not know what to do. Actual mothers are not like that. Nor is God like that. Actual mothers love each child, though the limits of time and strength curtail the care each child can have. If there is a God at all, we may suppose he loves each of his human children, for it is

of the very nature of God to be loving, and to be limitless. We make him less than God to suppose that he loves humanity merely in the mass—even we humans do not love our friends that way. We forget that he is infinite if we make the story of creation a nursery rhyme and his universe a shoe.

And finally, the objection we are considering rests tacitly on a deistic view of the relation of God to his universe. But God is not far off looking down from above or from without upon millions of separate human folk. God is immanent in his universe, and that means that he is already within each one of us. "Closer is he than breathing." In prayer we strive to become conscious of a Presence that is already part of our very nature. The essence of prayer is a quest for "the beyond that is within." [12]

(4) "Prayer is often unanswered."

Probably the chief practical reason why many people have ceased to pray is the fact that in the past they have prayed sincerely, yet with no apparent results. A great deal of harm has been done by a too literal reading of the promise that *whatsoever* is asked in faith shall be received. If our faith be that of Jesus there are some things we will not ask. Or asking, we shall add, as Jesus did, "Nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done."

Why is prayer so often unanswered? Without as-

[12] A phrase coined by Professor Rufus Jones.

suming to read the hidden purposes of God, there are some reasons that lie near the surface.

God could not possibly grant all the petitions that are uttered, for we ask for so many contradictory things. A striking example of this appeared in the World War—and, in fact, has appeared in every war. Thousands of folk on this side of the Rhine prayed for victory over the Germans; thousands more, equally devout and equally sincere, raised petitions to God from German soil to spare the Fatherland and grant victory over their enemies. In our own country we have but to turn back a few decades to find the Mason and Dixon line a boundary, not merely between conflicting armies, but between conflicting hosts of praying Christians. It is of course easy to say that since *our side* was right, God should have turned a deaf ear to the prayers of our enemies. But "our side" is a very variable term.

If God is rational and good, he cannot possibly grant all our petitions, for we ask so often for the wrong kind of things. The example just cited will serve again. There is surely need to pray in time of war for moral strength to meet the crisis, for wisdom to discern the path to follow. But to utter prayers of hate and to call down the wrath of God upon our enemies is nowhere enjoined upon us. We are prone to forget the words of one who said, "Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you." And coming closer to our ordinary petitions, we often ask

for things that God could grant only by setting aside the orderly system of natural law that he has established for our good. God *may* work miracles: we have no right to say he is deaf to our cry if he does not. Like foolish children we utter many prayers that a wise parent could answer only by denial. The right kind of prayer makes us willing to accept denial at the hands of an all-wise God.

Another patent reason why prayer is sometimes unanswered is the fact that what we *call* prayer is often merely a substitute. We mentioned earlier some things [13] that pass as prayer which are far removed from its real nature. Mere repetition of words will not avail. Nor can we expect our prayers to be answered if we lie back lazily and expect God to do all the work. It would be tragic folly to ask God to set a broken bone, and refuse to call a physician. We cannot expect God by prayer alone to stop the bootleg traffic in our city. It is not lack of faith alone that makes prayer ineffective: it is more often lack of consecrated effort to bring to fruition the object for which we pray.

As we earlier remarked, there is need of caution in affirming, or denying, that God has answered prayer in specific instances. The real issue is whether prayer makes any difference in life for the better. Does the person who habitually prays have any different outlook on life from the person who does not? Here we

[13] *Supra*, p. 244 f.

can answer affirmatively without much question. There are good folks who do not pray. But the radiant personalities who live lives of sacrificial service, who go about doing good and meet the storms of life unafraid, are in the majority of cases praying people. Not in ostentatious display but in the inner recesses of the heart they seek the help of God for daily tasks, and prayer vindicates itself in living.

5. *Does prayer affect physical nature?*

The author would willingly omit discussion of this moot point, and the reader who wants an authoritative statement may well omit this section. It is included only because it is so crucial. On it hinges the question of miracle in the ordinary meaning of the term. On it in large measure hinges the efficacy of petitions for specific material things. On it hinges somewhat the question as to whether God can cause changes even in mental attitude—changes which must be mediated to consciousness through the neurones of the brain. The ramifications of the problem would fill many books. We can here merely state a few things that seem probable, and leave large areas in the realm of admitted uncertainties.

As in most moot questions, the answer seems perfectly certain and self-evident to those who hold opposing views. The person accustomed to think in terms of the mechanisms of physical science, exclaims immediately, "Why, of course not!" The person

whose world-view is built up largely on the basis of revealed religion and believes that "with God all things are possible" exclaims with equal vigor, "Why, of course, it can. It does; I know it!" Then he cites an instance, which his opponent at once demolishes as sheer coincidence. And we are back where we started from.

The answer must be found in our total philosophy of nature. A materialistic universe in which every act is rigidly determined by mechanical law has obviously no place for interpositions caused by prayer. A deistic universe can admit such a possibility only on the basis of divine "interventions"—interruptions of nature's orderly processes by the special act of a *deus ex machina.* We have seen reasons for rejecting both materialism and deism. The view that has been defended in these pages is that of theistic idealism. This view maintains that God is other than nature, but also that he is immanent in nature. Immanent, moreover, in *every* act of physical nature. This means that the activity of physical nature is itself the activity of God. It means that the laws of physical nature are the laws of God—God's ways of working. Let us see what answer we get to the problem on these premises.

In the first place, as we have remarked before, it is inherently improbable that God will set aside any law of nature in response to human wishes. This does not mean he *cannot* do so. It means, rather, that even with all the suffering that may ensue, a dependable

world is the best kind of world to live in. We discussed this point at length in connection with the problem of suffering and need not retrace our steps. It means here that a prayer that could be answered only by an interruption of the orderliness of nature might better not be answered; and the evidence of experience seems to testify that it is not.

In the second place, if the activity of nature is God's activity, this means that he is not bound by mechanical laws outside his power. This means that he can use the mechanisms of nature to achieve his ends. In short, it means that purpose has a meaning and scope superior to mechanism. The mechanisms of nature do not then disappear; but they reappear in new light as abstractions [14] holding true under certain limited conditions. To cite an example, my typewriter is a mechanism, lifeless, purposeless, sitting inactive on my desk. According to Newton's laws of motion it will remain inert until some force is applied to it. Suppose I purpose to write a page of this manuscript. I begin to tap its keys. It is no longer inert; it does my bidding. My purpose uses this convenient mechanism to achieve its ends, and no law is violated.[15] It is absurd to suppose God cannot do what human beings can. There

[14] An abstraction in this sense means, as its etymology suggests, something "drawn away from," something taken out of its total set of relations.

[15] The law of conservation of energy may be violated; this is a disputed point. If it is, it is violated in *every* act by which mind causes nature to do what it otherwise would not, and prayer is not a special case.

is reasonable basis for belief that God in response to prayer can work out his purposes in the physical order of events without the setting aside of any natural law.

In the third place, there is no reason to suppose that the natural laws we know are all the laws there are. New ones are discovered every day. Things that would have appeared "miraculous" to our fathers are now but commonplaces; for example, the radio. "A miracle is God's use of his own law-abiding powers to work out in ways surprising to us his will for our lives and for the world."[16] Applied to the problem of prayer, this means that when "more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of," it is entirely possible that these things are wrought by prayer in accordance with perfectly definite laws that are yet to be discovered.

And finally, there are many complex forces at work in the universe, and some of these forces cause deviations in the operations of other forces. We seldom get, practically, the complete abstraction from all entangling circumstance which is necessary for any law of nature to function in isolation. We constantly find deviations from the wonted course of things, and it is impossible empirically to set limits beyond which this cannot happen. Normally a body heavier than air—steel, for example—seeks the earth through the pull of gravitation; yet a good deal of steel goes into an aeroplane and it soars aloft. This is because the com-

[16] Fosdick, *The Modern Use of the Bible*, p. 162.

bination of certain other physical forces with the inventive genius of the human mind has overcome, in a measure, the force of gravitation, though it never for a moment ceases its downward pull. Higher laws transcend, without annulling, lower laws.

Applied to our problem, this means that there may be in the universe a fundamental law of prayer which takes precedence over the ordinary laws of physical nature. We cannot say with certainty that there is. Nor can we say that there is not. It is at least a reasonable hypothesis, which may some day be empirically verified.[17] He who denies it speaks dogmatically.

6. *What kinds of prayer are legitimate?*

When we ask the question as to what kinds of prayer are legitimate, we may mean by it either what kinds are morally and spiritually justifiable, or what kinds may be engaged in with a reasonable hope of their efficacy. Though the two are related we shall fix attention mainly on the latter, assuming that the moral insight of the reader gives sufficient answer to the former.

(1) *Prayers of worship.* This type of prayer is so obviously legitimate, provided one believes in God at all, that it raises no very serious problem. The prayer of communion or fellowship is the natural impulse of the religious spirit. Whether private or public worship

[17] Investigations in the field of mental telepathy, though as yet they yield no generally accepted conclusions, point to a possibility of communication without physical media which may eventually throw light on the problem of prayer.

be engaged in, there can be little question of its efficacy or value. From it comes spiritual reinforcement and a new incentive to live a godlike life. There are practical problems involved, such as *how* to worship, and how to keep the forms of worship from being forms and nothing more. But in theory the chief stumbling block is passed if one is reasonably assured that there is a God to worship.

One problem, to be sure, the psychologist presents us with—one we have already met in reference to the objectivity of prayer. It is said that if God "inspires" the worshipper by adding new content to his consciousness, there is a break in the chain of causation—a break that is impossible in a world of law. Therefore we must trace back the spiritual reinforcement to antecedent states, mainly to the subconscious mind, and leave God out.

The principal grounds on which to answer this challenge have already been traversed. We saw that the psychology and the philosophy of prayer are two quite different things, and the psychologist may legitimately trace the inspiration that comes from worship to antecedent states without affirming or denying God. This does not mean that God has no part in the process. It means rather that what he imparts to the worshipper is not new content, but new meaning and value in the content his earlier experience supplies. Isaiah would not have had his vision in the temple with its call to service, had he not been a devout man deeply con-

cerned for the welfare of his people. When God spoke to him he spoke through the channels already prepared, but Isaiah saw in the experience new meaning and went forth a new man.

And if the objection be further urged, that for God to inspire Isaiah or any other man he must do it through the neurones of his brain and thus upset the course of physical causation, two rejoinders may be made. (1) It is by no means certain that mental activity conforms to the kind of mechanical causation observable in physical nature; in fact, the burden of evidence is on the other side.[18] (2) But granting that there are mental mechanisms, these mechanisms may be used by purpose to achieve its ends. The neurones of the brain, like the rest of the physical world, are God's ways of acting in his universe, and through them he communicates with man.

(2) *Prayers of petition.* (a) *For moral help.* One type of petition is so close akin to the prayer of worship that it requires no extended treatment. This is the prayer for moral and spiritual aid. It differs from the prayer of worship in that worship is directed mainly God-ward, with gratitude and adoration as its essential elements, while the petition for moral help is directed self-ward as well as God-ward, with confession and supplication as dominant motifs. It shares the values and the problems of the prayer of worship, and save for the fact that our natural self-interest tends to make it a

[18] Cf. *supra,* pp. 155-161, 233-239.

substitute for worship it is seldom dissociated from it.

One problem here merits a word. It is obvious that the fixation of attention upon one's sins with the resolution to overcome them that accompanies the act of prayer has very great psychological value. One cannot cry "God, be merciful to me, a sinner," and mean it, without the strengthening of his moral purpose. Why then does it so often happen that a person is sincerely repentant, prays sincerely for God's help to overcome temptation, yet straightway goes and sins again? The answer is found both in man's freedom, and in man's lack of freedom. God will not force any person to be good: prayer alone will not take the place of rugged moral discipline. And former sins have left their scars, stamped deep in the structure of body and mind, scars that cannot be obliterated in a moment. There are "sudden conversions," but not all conversions are sudden. That the road to moral self-control is long and arduous is no argument against the efficacy of prayer.

(b) *For material things.* We might stop at this point, assuming that the whole field of legitimate prayer has been covered. By far the larger part of it, and the most important part, has been covered. The life of prayer is amply justified if it includes only worship and petitions for moral and spiritual goods. In strict honesty, we can be *sure* that the prayers thus far considered are efficacious; we cannot be very certain beyond this point.

Yet it would not be fair to assume there is no justification at all for the prayer that asks for specific material goods, or for the occurrence of specific external events. In the first place, there are moral grounds for believing that such prayers under some conditions are justifiable. Material goods, particularly money and bodily health, are very essential instruments to the pursuit of higher values. Without enough of each to sustain life in a reasonable state of efficiency, it is impossible very successfully to develop one's moral or spiritual nature. It would be immoral to ask God to help me enhance my bank account for selfish motives or by selfish means. But if I need money to *live,* or to get an education, or to carry on a worthy work, there is no reason why I should not ask God's help. When Jesus taught us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," it is straining the point to say he meant only spiritual bread.

The objection is urged, that for God to grant a petition for material things would mean a deviation from the course of nature. It depends, of course, on how he answers it. We cannot expect checks to fall from heaven before our faces as we pray. God does not any longer drop down manna in the wilderness or send ravens to feed the hungry. But the point of the manna and raven stories is wholly missed if we quibble over the incidents and fail to catch the truth that was so meaningful to our Hebrew fathers, the lesson of God's protecting care. We have seen that it is at least

a tenable hypothesis that God can, and does, cause the course of external events to change in response to purpose without the violation of any law. Human beings can, and it is scarcely credible that God's power is less than man's.

And if we reduce to a minimum what may be claimed, there remains at least the fact that in the act of praying for needed material goods, there is a psychological incentive to work more zealously to secure them. And this is not to be despised. When one cares enough about getting an education to pray over it, he usually does something about it. Friends become interested, and the way opens. God usually, perhaps always, answers prayer through changing human attitudes rather than physical events. And this is well. Prayer is not magical incantation; it is personal fellowship.

(c) *For the recovery of the sick.* Prayers for the recovery of the sick involve no different principle from the type we have just considered, for bodily health is a material good. But since the problem assumes special importance in many minds, we shall give it a further glance.

In praying people, and in many who otherwise never pray, there is natural impulse to turn to God for help when physical illness lays low their loved ones and human aid seems unavailing. It is not very commendable, perhaps, to pray *only* in emergencies. But

it is a tribute to the power of religion over the spirit of man that there are very few people who do not pray —whether they will admit it or not—when the death angel hovers near.

Have we a right so to pray? In the first place, regardless of the question of the efficacy of the prayer to affect the health of the person who is ill, we do have a right to pray if we want to—and nobody can say us nay! If the act of prayer relieves the psychological tension of the suffering patient or the anxious onlooker, prayer is helpful. The only things we would not have a right to do in the matter would be to make prayer a substitute for medical care, or to lose faith in God when healing does not come.

But to what extent have we a right to believe such prayer will be efficacious in the healing of the sick? It depends somewhat on the nature of the illness. Functional diseases are those in which no organic tissue has been destroyed; the organs remain intact but are defective in their activity. All nervous disorders and the physical disturbances that result are functional. Organic diseases are those in which organic tissue has been injured or destroyed; as in tuberculosis, cancer, or a broken bone. It may be said with certainty that functional disorders may be very greatly helped by prayer, for the restoration of a proper mental outlook brings with it the restoration of the body's functioning. Of organic diseases we must speak more cautiously.

But even here mind has great power over body, and it is a patent fact that in most such cases anxiety retards recovery and mental poise accelerates it. Christian Science and faith-healing cults have caught and used this simple but very important truth.

There are limits beyond which prayer cannot check the operation of nature's laws: prayer cannot kill bacilli or restore a lost organ. But prayer can give to doctor, nurse and patient greater poise and greater power to fight the illness. It can give the sufferer courage to bear his suffering unafraid. It may not remove the "thorn in the flesh"—it did not remove Paul's —but it can give power to do a mighty work in spite of physical handicaps. And if prayer can do these things, it is worth while to pray.

(d) *For other people.* With one final query we shall be done. Is the prayer of intercession justifiable? Do I have a right to expect that God, in response to my prayer, will give physical or spiritual aid to another individual? There is no question regarding prayer around which hovers so much doubt, for it brings together the two moot points of the objectivity of prayer and the power of God to alter physical events.

Again we can say some things with certainty and others with caution. Two values the prayer of intercession has beyond all cavil: (1) It makes me more interested in my neighbor—more anxious to do what I can to help him, (2) if he knows I am praying for him in a sympathetic spirit it tends to make him more re-

sponsive.[19] These values are sufficient to justify the practice if there are no others. It would be selfish to pray wholly for myself and to leave out my neighbor. Our obligation to pray for others is a consequent of our duty both as Christians and as members of a social universe.

Has it further efficacy? The answer depends on our view of the disputed points on which it hinges. If prayer is objective, as we have seen reason to suppose it is, the first obstacle is passed, for if God can help me he can help my neighbor. The more difficult question is whether God can, and does, change physical events and mental attitudes by processes other than the ordinary physical media. If the view be accepted that all physical activity is God's activity, whether in the human body or without, then there is no inherent reason why he cannot do so. As to whether he does do so, the reader must form his own opinion. The question is one to be settled by observation of experience rather than by theoretical considerations.

. . . .

It is difficult to steer a middle course between claiming too much for prayer and claiming too little. Our fathers probably claimed too much. But they never lost sight of one thing which in this day we bid fair to surrender—the sense of God's over-arching care.

[19] This is not to be taken too literally. Great tact must be exercised in telling another person one is praying for him. The implication that he needs to be prayed for often makes him angry.

There was a resonance about their faith that doubt has well-nigh banished, and by prayer their faith moved mountains. We would do well, with all the caution intellectual advance entails, to recover some of our father's certainty.

And woe to religion if we do not, for the very life of religion is bound up with the practice of prayer. Prayer is not all there is of religion, but it is its inner, life-giving force. Without it, we may theorize about religion and get some sort of theology or metaphysics. Without it, we may labor for the betterment of the social order and get some sort—often a very good sort—of social ethics. But without it, religious experience cannot survive. Let us pray.

CHAPTER XII

IMMORTALITY

Some years ago it was my privilege to visit the museum in Cairo where are displayed many of the treasures from the tomb of Tutankhamen. The massive gold sarcophagi of the king and queen, his golden chariot, golden furniture, alabaster vessels, scarabs innumerable of precious stones, all give evidence of the richness of Egypt's royal treasure-house in the era when this king laid down his mortal life. It gives evidence also of a deep conviction among his people that their king was not dead, but living on in a realm where he would have need of all the panoply with which kings are served in this earthly sphere.

Thirty-four centuries the belief in immortality has lived, and many centuries more. Away back in the dawnings of religion in the consciousness of primitive man we find it, and in some form we find it in every religion of civilized man. Whether it be conceived as passage to the happy hunting-grounds, or union with Brahma the great over-soul, or a linkage of spirit with ancestral tablet, or a journey across the Styx to the Elysian Fields, or a shadowy life in Sheol, or immortal life in our Father's house of many mansions, men have stubbornly refused to believe that death ends all.

In the twentieth century we are witnessing a new phenomenon in religious history—a wide-spread rejection of this belief that has so long held sway. Doubters there have been, to be sure, in previous eras. Jacques Gruet in the Geneva of Calvin's time almost four centuries ago was put to death for doubting it.[1] But he could not have been put to death for "so blasphemous a heresy" had not the Church accepted the belief in the future life as an assured fact—a fact as certain as the existence of the world we live in here and now. The extent to which the idea of the other world influenced medieval thought is too familiar to need more than mention.

The concept of this life as a mere pilgrimage to the life beyond still dominates our hymnody.

"I am a stranger here,
Heaven is my home."

"O Paradise, O Paradise,
Who would not sigh for thee."

"A never-dying soul to save
And fit it for the sky."

But such words have well-nigh lost their meaning to the modern mind. Dr. Fosdick remarks that fitting a never-dying soul for the sky is certainly not the way a typical member of the younger generation would describe his major and dominant ambition![2]

[1] In 1553. Other charges were also raised against him, but the crucial piece of evidence was a passage of Calvin's arguing for immortality on which Gruet had written the words, "All nonsense."
[2] *Adventurous Religion*, p. 23.

This does not mean, of course, that immortality is not believed in any longer. The majority of religious people still believe, or would like to believe. But the belief has become overcast with doubt—a doubt that has passed in many minds to outright rejection.

Two factors have been mainly responsible for the growth of this doubt. One is the revision in our astronomical concepts that began with Copernicus and has been gradually seeping down to the masses ever since. For four centuries men have known that there is no place for heaven up in the sky, and that "up" is a variable term depending upon what time of day it is. Yet the human mind has a strange capacity for keeping its ideas in water-tight compartments; and because he was taught in childhood that the soul at death goes up to heaven, fully many an adult has known these simple astronomic facts, but has gone on putting his heaven in the sky. But the time comes when he can no longer be self-deceived, and if a choice between astronomy and immortality be brought to an issue astronomy wins out.

The other factor which has done much to banish belief in immortality is the growth of a type of psychology which leaves it no standing ground. If what we call mind or spirit or soul is body *and body only,* then when the body dies personality must cease. Even if, avoiding a strict materialism, we hold that spirit is inevitably and finally *dependent on* the functioning of the brain, there can be no personal immortality. Such

concepts have made great headway in the past quarter-century, and in this period probably more people have rejected immortality than in all the world's previous history.

Can we deny it in the face of the hold it has had on man's religious thought? Can we affirm it in the face of our new scientific knowledge? It is easy enough to seize either horn of the dilemma if we overlook the other. But it is not easy to grasp them both together. Let us see what we can make of it.

1. *What is immortality?*

There are several distinct kinds of immortality, and while the term is often used to stand for only one of these, it will avoid confusion if we see at the outset what these kinds are and how they differ.

(1) *Biological immortality.* Biological immortality is the continuance of the germ-plasm from generation to generation, and with it the passing on of inheritable traits. Of this type of immortality there is no scientific doubt. It has a good deal of moral value also in the incentive it gives to choose such mates as will permit the passing on of desirable characteristics. While the science of eugenics is in its infancy, the fact of the inheritance of both physical and mental traits offers great opportunities for the improvement of the race. The knowledge that every parent will live on in his children, and in his children's children throughout countless generations, ought to be a challenge to trans-

mit a worthy heritage. We have done a great deal of looking backward to our ancestors: we would do well to look forward to our descendants.

(2) *Social immortality.* Social immortality is the inheritance of the influence that every individual leaves behind him, for good or ill. Each of us is born into an environment shaped by the social legacies of millions. Each of us leaves when we die some contribution, however feeble, to the social fabric of succeeding generations.

It is a challenging, yet somewhat appalling, fact that the impress I make on the lives of those around me will live on forever! Of course the years I shall be *remembered* are relatively few. It is given to few to make such an impression on their times that their names go down in history. But so closely bound up are we in the social whole that I cannot *live* without affecting other lives, and those others others, and on through countless ages.

Social immortality also is an indubitable fact. There is a good deal of moral challenge in it, both in the thought of passing on a worthy influence and in the possibility of carrying forward the work of one whose labors on earth have ceased. There is sound philosophy in the old war-song, "John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave, but his soul goes marching on."

There is comfort also in the thought that everybody gets as much social immortality as he deserves, and

the kind he deserves. This does not mean that everyone gets all the recognition he merits; the opposite is patent. But however humble the corner in which one spends his life, he touches lives that touch other lives, and his influence is proportionate to the power of his personality. And whatever be the nature of the influence he exerts, it is written for good or ill in the structure of succeeding generations.

Never has the truth of social immortality received finer expression than in the words of the apocryphal book of Wisdom: [3]

"For in the memory of virtue is immortality,
Because it is recognized both before God and before men;
When it is present men imitate it,
And they long after it when it is departed;
And throughout all time it marcheth crowned in triumph,
Victorious in the strife for the prizes that are undefiled."

(3) *Impersonal immortality.* Another kind of immortality holds an important place in some religions and some philosophies. This is the idea that when death comes, the personality of the individual ceases, yet it is not lost because merged with the all-inclusive whole. We find this in the Brahman conception of the future life as union with Brahma, the great impersonal over-soul. In somewhat more negative form it appears in the Buddhist conception of the goal of life as the extinction of personal identity in Nirvana—a shadowy existence in which man shall know only that he no

[3] Wisdom of Solomon, 4: 1, 2.

longer is, and no longer desires. Most modern pantheisms hold to some kind of conservation of values in the Absolute, with cessation of personal consciousness and a sublime disregard for the continuance of anything save the values for which man, in his brief span of years, has striven. This is often linked, sometimes identified, with social immortality, though the latter does not necessarily imply reference to an Absolute. Some forms of theistic religious thought, shrinking both from ordinary personal immortality and from the impersonality implied in an Absolute, maintain that man's spirit at death is merged with God. As an individual he ceases to be, yet he lives on as an element of the divine existence.

These concepts have wide variations, yet have the common element of attempting to combine man's preservation with his annihilation. The idea is not an easy one to think. And justly so, for despite the valiant arguments put forth by pantheists, and the religious influence of the concept in the Orient, it is fundamentally irrational to suppose that a person can live on, yet cease to be a person. Only persons can experience values; only in persons can values be conserved. Neither personality nor values can be poured into any reservoir of wholeness, whatever name be applied to it. To assume that persons perish and values are merged in God's existence is to imply that God uses the toil and travail of men as a means only to his own self-enrichment—and even we humans in our bet-

ter impulses are not so selfish as that. The argument for an impersonal immortality either acquires definiteness of meaning by identifying itself with social immortality, or it remains an empty concept.

(4) *Personal immortality.* Personal immortality is what religion has usually meant by the term "immortality"—the continuance of personal conscious existence beyond the grave. It is the storm center around which the controversy rages. As we shall devote the remainder of the chapter to it, we need not say more about it here.

2. *Is personal immortality desirable?*

In addition to the scientific considerations that seem to many minds to make personal immortality impossible, the belief has lost footing through the growth of another rather wide-spread attitude—the feeling that eternal life, were it possible, is not to be desired. This feeling roots in soils of very different kind; in moral lethargy and in self-effacing altruism. On the one hand, many people feel that this life is too much of a struggle to make the continuance of it through eternity a desirable consummation. An eternity in hell nobody desires. A life of endless bliss in heaven would—speaking bluntly—get tiresome. The philosophical concept of a life of endless moral growth requires a continuance of effort, an effort that can never cease throughout eternity, and the prospect is not alluring but appalling. In all sincerity many feel that they

would rather lay down the task and let the process be bounded by the limits of this earthly life.

On the other hand, many feel that immortality is undesirable because the great task of life is to make a contribution to the social whole, and after having done one's best to serve society here, there is no need that one's own petty personality be preserved. In such minds the implications of social immortality bear great weight. The emphasis is all misplaced, the argument runs, to try to fit one's own soul for eternal life; if one will forget about that phase of the problem and labor to the limit to leave behind him a better world, the social fabric will give him all the immortality he needs, or wants.

These are considerations not to be scorned. But they overlook some things.

The argument from the undesirability of continued moral effort assumes that such a life will have, as it sometimes does here, a surplus of pain over satisfaction. Also, a wholesome instinct bids us shrink from the thought of heaven as a sphere of endless inactivity. Nobody wants to sit on a cloud, or even play a harp forever! But without physical limitations, there will be less pain. And if one may live on and labor in some worthful work, and have his personality constantly enriched in values that are inexhaustible in variety and scope, both the tedium and the arduousness of such a life disappear. Even here the life of growth and service yields the richest satisfactions; if

there is a life beyond we can be reasonably assured that we shall continue to grow, and serve, and thereby be happy. It is a defect of imagination that makes such a life seem undesirable.

The argument from the sole desirability of service to society is challenging, yet vulnerable. In the first place, the argument goes astray, with all its unselfishness, by fixing attention too much on self. I have a right to say, perhaps, that my own petty personality is not worth preserving. But have I right to say that about my mother's? Or your mother's? Rich treasures they leave behind them in the social fabric. But of such personality I have no right to say that it *ought* to go out, when death comes, like a snuffed candle.

Furthermore, the argument tends to forget that it is *personality itself* which makes service valuable. Were there no persons to serve, or to do the serving, there could be no immortality of worthful influence. Character and love are meaningless apart from persons that are good and loving. Without knowing minds, knowledge vanishes. The things we prize in the rarest personalities we know *ought* to be enduring, and they can be ultimately enduring only if personality endures.

Personal immortality finds no adequate substitute in biological or social or impersonal immortality. It is highly probable that life upon this planet will some day cease. While we cannot speak with utter certainty, a gradually cooling sun will probably leave this planet

some day cold, dark, uninhabited and uninhabitable. What then will have become of the values conserved in the biological or social stream? They will have vanished into utter nothingness, and there will be no immortality.

Even assuming that the sun's heat may be renewed by some cosmic process not yet understood, personal immortality still lacks a satisfying substitute. Any other view makes the labor of each generation merely instrumental to those that follow. But every individual, however much he may be a means to the good of others, is an end in himself, and ought to be treated as an end. My parents and yours have been instruments, perhaps valuable instruments, in the onward march of biological and social progress. But it would be immoral, even from a human standpoint, to value them *merely* as such instruments and give no heed to what they are in and for themselves. No individual can be fuel to feed society and nothing more; he is something worthful in his own right. If this is so, God is less moral than we humans if he does not provide for the conservation of the individual. Only personal immortality makes this possible.

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Some positive considerations favor the belief that personal immortality is desirable. The most obvious of these, of course, is the hope and comfort it offers in time of bereavement. This is often scorned as a

"merely emotional" consideration blinding our eyes to the cold, stern facts. But while it affords no proof on either side, it is not to be scorned. We *live* by our emotions more than logic, and lacking logical evidence to the contrary, we have a right to believe. The fact that almost everybody would like to believe in immortality, if he could, shows at least that it is practically desirable.

Another consideration, both practical and moral, is the fact that faith in eternal life makes this life richer and more worth living. Nor does this mean that fear of hell will scare us into being good, or hope of heaven lure us. In the past, the future life was thought of almost wholly as a matter of reward and punishment, and was a potent moral incentive. This type of moral incentive has lost its hold. The person is rare, nowadays, whose moral conduct is affected to any marked degree by the fear of eternal damnation or hope of eternal reward. Nor is this transition regrettable, for the traditional idea put conduct on a hedonistic basis that often obscured the intrinsic worth of goodness and bred a false attitude toward the future life.

By saying that faith in eternal life makes this life richer we mean rather that the values for which we strive here and now take on a new color when viewed in the vista of eternity. It is worth while to learn all I can if I am to carry this mental content with me through eternity. It is worth while to love all I can if I am to prepare myself for an endless life of love.

It is worth while to rule my spirit if this spirit is to endure forever. If I am to "live with myself" eternally, I shall want this self to be worth living with. The total effect of such a conception is to afford as in the past a moral incentive, but on a new, and firmer, basis.

Man's moral task is endless. Within every individual there is the obligation to grow, and the capacity for growth has no upper limit. Nothing save the continuance of personal existence beyond the grave will give opportunity for the continuance of personal moral growth. As Browning put it:

> "A man's reach should exceed his grasp,
> Or what's a heaven for?"

A man's reach does exceed his grasp, and there ought to be a heaven.

There is need of a future life for cosmic justice. No fact is more patent than that the goods of this life, intangible as well as material, are unevenly distributed. Some people have "more than their share" of suffering. Others have—or they seem to the observer to have—more than their share of the good things of this life without deserving them. The latter consideration is not important; the former is. If good people can suffer bitterly through many years through no fault of theirs, and death ends all, something is wrong with the universe.

The supreme reason for the desirability of personal immortality is the intrinsic worth of personality. In

all this vast, indestructible material universe there is nothing so precious. On personality all lesser values depend; from it they derive their meaning. The human individual is able creatively to produce new values, and his potential capacity for doing so is infinite. Whether as end or means, it is morally desirable that personality survive. The preservation of the soul of man may well depend on whether it is worth preserving.

3. *Is personal immortality scientifically possible?*

We have seen some reasons for believing that personal immortality is to be desired. Granting that we want to believe in it, can we? Can we, that is, without doing violence to well-established scientific facts?

First, what of the objections from astronomy? It used to be easy enough to put our realm of disembodied spirits in the sky, and to put the tortures of the damned in the fires of the earth's interior. As a child I listened to a preacher who used to warn us to flee from the devil's clutches, for "hell is only eighteen miles away!" Another worthy divine of much general intelligence used to say that he expected when he got to heaven "to go skipping from star to star." Both since have gone to their reward; they may know more about it now than we.

Of course it is obviously impossible to localize heaven or hell in any part of the material world. If it were necessary so to localize it, we should at once have to surrender belief in a future life. Fortunately

for the belief this is not necessary, or even desirable, for any reason except as a crutch to the imagination. There is an implicit materialism in the assumption that heaven must be a *place*, with everything and everybody in it spatial. In Chapter VII we saw that personality, even in this life, occupies no space whatever; it cannot be measured in terms of length, breadth and thickness. It functions through a human body; but nobody, save a fast-diminishing number of those who believe in the resurrection of the flesh, expects that we are going to take our terrestrial bodies with us when we die, or resume them afterward. Some power of intercommunication there will doubtless be if there is immortality at all, but certainly not through the fleshly, spatial bodies that we know. The future life is not a place to be physically located. It is a spiritual state to be spiritually and intellectually conceived, not pictured by the senses.

A great deal of trouble has arisen from the attempt to apply sense imagery to the non-sensuous. This has given us our pearly gates and golden streets, our harps and winged angels. But in all fairness to our fathers (and to those who still find sense imagery necessary if they would conceive immortality at all), there is a value in this symbolism that might have been missed without the symbols. Men have tended always to conceive of heaven in terms of beauty, and in terms of the highest that they knew. With our sophistication

we may miss a truth they saw. The literal inaccuracies in such symbolism we do well to surrender; it would be tragic to surrender with them its deeper meaning.

. . . .

We come now to a more serious problem—the question as to whether the psychologist will let us go on believing in the continuance of personal identity without a living body. As we saw, either one of two widely held theories, that mind is body or inevitably dependent on body, would make the survival of personal consciousness after death impossible.

Let us go back to what was said about human personality in Chapter VII. There we saw that mind and brain differ so radically that it requires a great straining of the evidence to identify them. Brain is experienced as a physical substance; mind as meanings, imaginings, purposes, appreciations, values. Brain is spatial; mind occupies no space whatever. It is evident enough that personality and body are not identical.

It is not so certain that mind (or personality) is not inevitably dependent on body. Empirically, it is. That is, within the range of our experience we always find mind and brain conjoined. An injury to the brain causes a corresponding injury to the mind. A "feeble-minded" person is one whose brain cells do not function normally. There is a very intimate connection.

Yet it does not follow from this that the connection

is irreducible and ultimate. We owe to William James the formulation of a distinction which helps to clear up the problem.[4] The function of the brain may be, he says, either *productive* or *transmissive*. An organ of the body which has a productive function causes the existence of something else. The stomach produces (or secretes) gastric juice and the liver bile.[5] If "thought is a function of the brain" in a productive sense, its relation is somewhat analogous to that of light to an electric current or power to a moving waterfall. An organ which is transmissive, on the other hand, merely serves as the instrument by which something is made accessible, as the heart transmits blood without producing it and the lungs oxygen. There are plenty of examples, both within the body and without, of intimate connection where the relation is transmissive rather than productive; for example, glass transmits light—even modifies it by refraction—but does not produce it. Organ keys open pipes which transmit air, and music results, but the function both of keys and pipes is solely instrumental. Professor James' suggestion is that the relation of brain to mind is transmissive rather than productive.

The term instrumental, or expressive, is perhaps more accurate than transmissive to describe this view of the mind-body relation. On such a theory there is

[4] Ingersoll lecture on *Human Immortality*.

[5] Cf. the famous saying of Cabanis, "The brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile." The examples given are in part mine, not James', but accord with his distinction.

no barrier to immortality, for if the brain is the instrument through which consciousness expresses itself, the dependence is not final. The instrument may wear out, like all other physical instruments, and a new instrument—perhaps a very different one in some respects—may be acquired. I cannot see across a room without my spectacles; there is a very intimate dependence of my eyes upon these bits of glass. But when these get smashed I get new ones; I do not go all my days unseeing. When there is music in the soul of the organist, the organ may get out of order and the music be interrupted, but sweet melodies will come forth again from a repaired organ or a new one.

Not all psychologists would assent to this distinction. James' solution is a possible, not a necessary, interpretation of the mind-body relation. It merits serious consideration, for it accounts both for the mental disturbance caused by physical injury and for the mind's power over the body. The facts known to psychology and physiology can be adequately accounted for on this basis. The theory has respectable psychological standing. Yet the true explanation may lie elsewhere.

The significance of the view we have been stating lies in the fact that so long as there is any interpretation which accords both with the facts observable by science and with the possibility of immortality, we cannot say that science has closed the door. And this is the situation. The investigations of psychology and physiology can point out a very close concomitance between brain-

events and mind-events: beyond this they cannot go. To do more is to get out of the realm of science and into that of philosophy. Unless the psychologist be at the same time a philosophical materialist, he will not assert that the mind-body relation makes immortality impossible. The problem is not one that can be settled definitely in the field of psychology.

There is of course no agreement among scientists on the problem, as there could not be in a field where empirical data are so lacking. Spiritistic investigations have been made by societies for psychic research both in Europe and America, which may eventually give more data. The vast majority of spiritualist *séances* are merely hoaxes to deceive the gullible. Some, however, have been carefully conducted and scientifically observed, and the fact that the findings thus acquired have been sufficient to convince so eminent a scientist as Sir Oliver Lodge should prevent the uninformed from ridiculing such investigations as mere hokum. They seem at least to point to the possibility of the communication of minds without physical media through mental telepathy, and thus to have value in refuting the claims of the materialist. However, it is probable that faith in immortality will continue to rest in the future as in the past on moral, religious and metaphysical grounds rather than on proved scientific data.

One further consideration, admittedly metaphysical, should be mentioned in reference to the scientific possi-

bility of immortality. This is the distinction, often lost sight of, between the metaphysical and the empirical cause of an event. The sun melts ice, empirically speaking; the metaphysical cause is not to be found in the sun or its rays, but in the power that has established such relations in the physical universe that this happens. That is, in God, if our earlier argument is sound. Applied to the immortality problem, this means that the mind's empirical dependence on the brain—even granting the brain's function to be productive rather than transmissive—is not the last word in the matter. It means that God is the ultimate metaphysical cause of the brain, as of every other part of the human body and of all physical nature. Brain activity thus becomes, speaking metaphysically, God's activity.[6] If this is true, the possibility of immortality rests not on scientific data, but on the power of God to preserve personality through channels other than those we experience here and now.

4. *What are the arguments against it?*

We have seen that personal immortality is desirable, and that there is no scientific fact that makes it impossible to believe. We might conclude pragmatically that since we *can* believe, and find value in believing, there is no cause for further argument. Perhaps in the last analysis the attitude we take will reduce to a

[6] This does not conflict with the possibility of human freedom, for in a free act man coöperates with God, using the neural mechanisms established by God for such a purpose.

choice; certainly it can never be a proved fact, whichever answer be accepted. We saw that the belief in God cannot be positively proved, and belief in immortality is both less certain and less crucial than belief in God. In large measure it hinges on it. But it would be running away from thought to decide solely on pragmatic grounds. Let us weigh the arguments on both sides. First, those urged against it.

(1) *Without a living body, no consciousness.* This, the strongest argument against personality's continuance, we have considered at sufficient length to see that it is at least no final barrier. True, appearances are against continuance. Without moral and religious reasons for believing, empirical data would in all probability not lead us to the belief. But appearances are against many things; that the earth travels more than a million miles a day, that matter is made of electrons, and hosts of other things believed to be true. Immortality is not known to be true, but if it is known to be possible, this argument cannot overthrow it.

(2) *No place for it in the material world.* This argument too we have examined, and have seen that there is no need for a place in the material world. We should not know what to do with it if we had such a place, for personality is not a spatial thing. The argument is a stumbling-block to the imagination, but not to thought.

(3) *Scientists disbelieve.* Some do; some do not. Professor Leuba some years ago conducted an investi-

gation by questionnaire to try to discover the belief of those in learned professions on the major religious problems, and the results are published in his *Belief in God and Immortality*.[7]

The answers show that roughly one-third of the scientists believe, one-third disbelieve, and the other third say they are in doubt. Professor Leuba, who rejects the belief himself, interprets these statistics as indicating that only one-third of the scientists in any field, and still fewer in biology and psychology, think there are reasonable grounds for holding the belief. But one may also see in these figures an evidence that at least two-thirds think it possible, since those who said they were in doubt would have answered with a negative if they had thought there was no possibility of it.[8]

In any case, what such figures indicate is merely that scientists disagree on a moot point, just as the rest of the world disagrees. Their opinion goes little, if any, farther. On the other hand, among those trained to think mainly in terms of moral and religious values, there is a very large, though not unanimous, expression of opinion in favor of belief.

(4) *Its lowly origin.* Some object to immortality on the ground that this belief, like the belief in God, roots back in primitive religion where it is mixed with superstition. Its first appearance is probably in the dreams

[7] *Op. cit.*, pp. 221-281.
[8] Cf. Wright, *A Student's Philosophy of Religion*, p. 424.

of primitive man. But let us remind ourselves of what we found in Chapter V about the validity of this argument in reference to God.[9] A mixture of superstition with truth means only that we must weed out the superstition, not abandon the truth. Origin never determines present meaning or value. Astronomy grew out of astrology with a large admixture of superstition; its origin in no wise disproves its present findings. So chemistry from alchemy. Were we to abandon everything with a lowly origin, we should have to get rid of most of the things we now believe.

(5) *Wishful thinking.* The psychologist comes at us, not only from the standpoint of the mind-body problem, but of the origin of our thoughts. He tells us that in more cases than we realize, "the wish is father to the thought," and warns us against rationalizing our desires. This is sound advice, provided we do not take it so seriously as to bend over backward. It is wrong to believe anything on insufficient evidence simply because we want to believe it. But it is just as bad to rationalize our prejudices as to rationalize our desires. The only safe procedure is to get all the evidence we can, remembering that moral values are as needful of being included as physical facts, and then form an opinion on the basis of the coherence test. It is to be suspected that some who decry "wishful thinking" are rejecting the belief on grounds as flimsy as those of any who accept.

[9] *Supra,* p. 81.

(6) *The desire is selfish.* We saw that some regard immortality as undesirable because it centers too much in self. Social immortality, with a sublime disregard of what happens to the individual, is urged as a substitute. We have already noted some limitations in this position. Furthermore, selfishness consists not in the desire to live on but in the *use* to be made of that life. The desire to live on in idleness—"to do nothing for ever and ever"—or even to live on in hedonistic bliss, would be selfish. But the desire to live, to grow, and to serve in whatever social relationships the future life may hold, is not selfish. It is no more selfish to desire to live after death than to desire to live tomorrow, or next week, or next year.

(7) *If true, everybody would wish to die.* It is sometimes argued that the person who believes in a future life superior to this is playing false with his own logic if he does not at once commit suicide to get there the sooner! Or, tempering this a bit, that no believer should fear death or fight against its coming. In this argument, as in all the others, there is a grain of truth. It is true that a firm confidence in a future life ought to reduce the fear of death, and it obviously does, as the death of many a heroic Christian testifies. But the fear of death is not built on logic; it is built on the most powerful of all biological instincts, the desire for self-preservation. It is hardly to be expected that any amount of logic, or even of religious faith, would make this instinct wholly lose its hold. This is

well, for upon it depends the possibility of the biological survival of the race. And whatever purposes God may have for a future life, he certainly has some for this life too!

(8) *Evolution makes the boundary-line uncertain.* The question is often raised as to whether we can believe "that animals go to heaven." We might like to take with us our pet dog, or a faithful horse. But what about all the snakes, and lice, and flies and other vermin we work so hard to kill? Shall we think that they too are immortal? Evolution makes the boundary-line between man and the lower animals indistinct, and it is argued that if man is immortal and animals are not, it is impossible to tell at what point in the biological scale man's immortality began.

The answer here must include the field of values as well as the field of biology. There would be no need of a future life except to conserve values, and persons alone are the bearers of values. So presumably only persons survive. And the point at which man began to be immortal is determined by the point at which he began to be a person, with the capacity to appreciate and produce values. We cannot say empirically *at what point* this happened, but this does not at all alter the more important fact that it *did* happen.

(9) *The future life would be over-crowded.* It is sometimes argued that if heaven must contain all the souls that have died since the world began (barring possibly those consigned to the nether fires), there

must be in it a strange congeries of folk, from primitive savage to twentieth-century civilized man, from Hottentot to Bostonian. It is suggested that there would not even be "standing-room only," and that if there were, it would not be pleasant to jostle elbows with so weird a company![10]

If this argument gets hold of the imagination, as it sometimes does, it should be pointed out that its defects are defects of the imagination. It pictures heaven as a glorified New York subway rush, replacing the former picture of spacious clouds and white-winged angels. Of the two, clouds and angels are to be preferred. But it is futile, of course, to try to picture the future life in space terms, or (therefore) to place any space limits on its capacity. As for experience with all kinds of folk, this comes nearer to a real possibility. Whatever the future life may be, it would be less than heaven if it did not permit the continuance of personal social relationships. It may be that we shall have contact with personalities of the past, and with all kinds of people. Such contact would have possibilities of infinite variety and richness. In any case, we have scarcely a right to import our very mundane racial snobbishness into the picture!

(10) *The difficulty of picturing its nature.* This brings us to a final objection, the difficulty of picturing

[10] This suggests the remark of a woman who was overheard to say that she loved to hear negroes sing about going to heaven but she hoped she would not have to live near any of them when she got there.

satisfactorily the nature of the future life. We are so sense-bound that we cannot *picture* it, without sense imagery; and when we try to *think* it, it requires a trained adult mind to let thought replace the picture. Our picture-thinking, built up in a space world, insists on injecting space categories into a non-spatial state of being, and there comes a clash which often tosses overboard the whole belief.

This is probably the strongest practical argument against it. In the day when heaven could be reached by way of astronomy, not many disbelieved. This, and the objection from the mind-body relation, seem to the author to be the only two that are really serious.

It must be admitted that there are a great many things about the future life that we do not know, and never shall know on this side of the veil. We "see through a glass darkly." It is hard to imagine how we shall recognize each other, or communicate, without the ordinary physical media. What of the "many mansions"? A non-physical world can scarcely have houses in the ordinary physical sense; in what state shall we dwell? Can children "grow up" in the sense of an increase in values without the growing up of a physical body? Such questions cause many to reject belief.

But before giving up too easily, some things should be considered. First, admitting frankly the impossibility of applying space imagery to a non-spatial world, we must stop trying to picture its nature in any detail. Some probable things about its nature we can derive

from thought; such as continued personal identity with continuity of memory stretching over from this life, freedom from hampering physical limitations, the power to recognize and communicate with others, love and friendship, opportunities for growth, a chance to serve, and the conservation and increase of values attained in the earthly life. These possibilities are far more important than anything sense imagery could give us, and all of them follow from the nature of personality and the purpose of its preservation.

In the second place, the impossibility of our picturing the future life is no argument against its existence. We have analogies in plenty in this life wherein there is continuity without the possibility of forecast. Egg, larva, chrysalis, butterfly—were this organism conscious as well as sentient it could not predict its later stages from the earlier. A similar analogy holds in the human organism—cell, fœtus, infant, man. From the vantage-point of the last of these stages we can look backward and survey the whole, but not from the earlier forward. It is entirely possible that we have not reached the last stage yet. When we do, perhaps we shall see no longer darkly, but face to face.

And finally, it is scarcely to be expected that finite man should know infinity. If God exists, and immortality is a fact, we may well leave to a superior wisdom the details of its nature. We may be confident that in the life beyond, no evil will befall us. And this is what really matters.

5. *What are the arguments for it?*

We have surveyed the objections to belief in personal immortality, and have found some that raise serious problems but none that is insuperable. The road to belief is at least open. What signs point forward on it? [11]

(1) *The reasonableness of the universe.* Of course, the universe may not be reasonable. Many who reject immortality believe that it is not, and to such this argument will have no weight. But all our scientific investigations assume its reasonableness. Without it, we never could put questions to physical nature with the assurance that if we ask the same question in the same way, we shall get back the same answer. Without it, every rational search for truth would end in a maze of irrationality. In our quest for God, we saw evidences that this is a mind-like universe. And if the universe is reasonable, there are some things about it that require immortality to complete its reasonableness. We shall see further in a moment what these are.

(2) *Moral optimism.* Have we a right to be optimistic? Maybe not. But optimism makes a difference in living which is more than mere emotion. It makes a difference which enters into the deepest sub-structure of human living, and in transforming personality trans-

[11] Some of the points here noted have already been touched upon in connection with the desirability of immortality. Desirability alone does not make immortality probable, but it indicates certain moral demands that must be satisfied in a coherent universe.

forms the world. Moral optimism, says Professor Macintosh, means "a fundamental attitude of confidence in the cosmos, together with a full sense of man's moral responsibility. It expresses and is expressed in the conviction that if only a person's will is right, he need have no fear of anything the universe can do to him; no absolute or final disaster can come to him whose will is steadfastly devoted to the true ideal. . . . It promises that all that he needs will be rightly his, and that being rightly adjusted at the center of his life, he need not even be afraid of them that kill the body but after that have no more that they can do." [12] And moral optimism is a strange paradox. It is a deep-seated conviction of human nature—so deeply rooted in life that not even the starkest tragedy can ever wholly blot it out. Yet it is a conviction that must be held to in the face of many obvious evil facts which, viewed only in their own light, point to the blankest pessimism. It is man's faith, not only in the reasonableness but the *goodness* of the universe, which leads him to faith in immortality.

(3) *The intrinsic worth of personality.* First among all the facts that make immortality a necessary postulate in a universe that is reasonable and good is the supreme value of human personality. In all the material universe there is nothing that even faintly rivals it in value. Not all of humanity is lovely. It is sometimes bestial, sodden, sinful—almost loathsome,

[12] *The Reasonableness of Christianity,* pp. 46-47.

though never so to one who sees with the eye of Christ. Yet every human derelict has infinite possibilities. There is a bit of divinity in every human person. Personality at its best is manifestly godlike, lovely, fair, of infinite worth. All these many million years it has been a-making, from star-dust to primeval ooze, from amœba to *homo sapiens,* from Neanderthal man to Socrates and Jesus. It is scarcely reasonable that all this can be shattered in a moment, like the bursting of iridescent bubbles in the sunshine.

If our conviction of the greatness of the human spirit be clouded over with shadows cast by astronomical immensities or biological animalities, it is well to turn aside from looking at the problem in the abstract and fix our attention on concrete human folk—the finest, rarest personalities we know. Ought that great intellect or that great soul to perish? Ought that person we admire and love, so precious in possibilities, to end existence as mere carrion flesh? Our instinctive feeling about the possibility of personality's annihilation is expressed by Professor Palmer of Harvard who wrote of the death of his wife Alice Freeman Palmer, "Though no regrets are proper for the manner of her death, who can contemplate the fact of it and not call the world irrational, if out of deference to a few particles of disordered matter it excludes so fair a spirit?" [13]

(4) *The conservation of values.* All along through

[13] Quoted by Fosdick in *The Assurance of Immortality,* p. 8.

our discussion we have spoken of the need for immortality as a guarantee of the conservation of values. Human personality is worth preserving not only because it is infinitely rich, but because in personality alone do we find an abiding-place of values. Without persons—no knowledge, no beauty, no goodness, no love, no friendship, no fun, no worship, no happiness. Such things *ought* to endure. And such things *can* endure only as persons endure. We have earlier seen the inadequacy of any attempted substitute in biological or social or impersonal immortality. The issue resolves itself to personal immortality or none.

Perhaps values are not conserved. Perhaps when the candle goes out there remains but stench and nothingness—or at best a momentary afterglow. But if this be so, the whole universe is awry. It is hard to conceive of God as striving through the æons to make man what he is, and then of man striving through his three score years and ten to build a worthful life, and "after that the dark." To conceive of values as conserved in God while persons perish is to make God less than godlike—it is to picture him at the end of time surveying the spectacle in lonely isolation, the only creature left to profit by the long march, and saying within himself, "Well, that's over now."

(5) *The problem of pain.* It would of course be illogical to assume that merely because this world is full of tribulation, there must be another realm of

eternal joy. Historically, it is doubtless true that the idea of heaven has often been a "compensation," an intellectual and spiritual escape from the stern realities of a very sordid, painful mundane sphere. Christianity taught its early adherents "how to find comfort in an uncomfortable world," [14] and it has done this more or less ever since by positing a better life beyond. But it would be a mistake to assume that this psychological release has no deeper meaning.

Not on psychological, but on logical and moral, grounds the problem of pain points to a life beyond. There are a great many "spirits in prison" in this earthly life, spirits imprisoned in pain-racked bodies and defective nervous systems and circumscribing environments. If these must go limited and unhappy all their days, then vanish forever, there is a stark mystery here. There can be neither cosmic reasonableness nor justice in a world where souls that ought to have their chance in a fair field are to be denied it forever. But if there is life eternal, the whole problem takes on new light. It must not be cited as excuse for inactivity in banishing this world's evils, but it gives assurance for a buoyant hope. Our "light affliction" which in the vista of eternity is but for the moment, "worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things

[14] From a student's examination paper.

which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." [15] Anything can be endured in a world of such a hope.

(6) *Man's moral task.* Man's moral task is infinite. At no point can the aspiring spirit say, "I am good enough." To make such an assertion is both to deceive one's self and to slip backward. However much choked with selfishness and sluggishness, the human spirit has within it an imperative command and unconditional obligation to grow. And if "man's moral task" be interpreted more broadly than ordinary goodness to include growth in spiritual discernment, growth in wisdom, growth in appreciation of beauty, growth in social fellowship, growth even in happiness, the same condition stands. However rich the personality we know, there are vistas beyond to view, new heights to reach. And death cuts short this task. Seldom can we say of any person, "His work is done"; never can we say it in an absolute sense. Done perhaps so far as this world goes, and death brings no regret for earthly tasks unfinished. But never done when viewed in the fullness of possibility that eternal life affords. Man's upward climb is toward a "flying goal," and its limits lie not within the narrow confines of this life. Of every high spiritual adventure we can say, "This is not all; there is more beyond." If this be so, there must be a life beyond as the eternal sphere of moral enterprise.

[15] II Cor. 4: 17, 18

(7) *The religious experience of humanity.* We found an argument for God to lie in the fact that men everywhere have sought after him. Not as proof, but as spiritual evidence to be fitted into any coherent view of things, this argument has weight. A similar condition holds with regard to the future life. The fact that men have almost always believed in immortality, and have found the belief a satisfying contributory factor in the pursuance of this world's tasks, should make us hesitate to esteem it lightly.[16] Tested by its fruits it has been found to inspire life, and this points us toward the belief that it is inspired of God, and true. If man feels perennially a need for immortality, the presumption is strong that just as every other deep-seated human need has a means of satisfaction, so immortality has a reality responding to man's need.

Still more evidence do we find in the fact that the belief stands in a stable and often central place in the spiritual vision of the world's seers. Our prophets, poets, painters, those who have left an enduring mark upon the religious and æsthetic experience of humanity, have seldom failed to pay tribute to its significance. Central in this experience is the power of the Easter message in the religious life of the Christian church. Faith in Jesus' resurrection and in the immortality of each lesser human spirit has been triumphantly pro-

[16] This does not mean that all the effects of belief in immortality have been beneficial. It has sometimes induced moral lethargy, though this has not been its predominant effect. The point here is that the belief has been found practically and religiously satisfying, else it would not have survived.

claimed in song and verse, in art and worship, and has brought to countless thousands a vision of spiritual verities.

An evidence which is enough to establish the belief as a basal fact in many minds, and to make all this long argument seem unnecessary, is the assurance of immortality given in the Bible. In particular, the words of Jesus seem to affirm it beyond dispute. We have all through this volume tried to keep to philosophical grounds and shall do so still. But it should be granted even by those who refuse to rest any belief upon authority that the presence of such a doctrine in all the great sacred literatures, and preëminently in the record of the experience and words of Jesus, is an evidence not lightly to be cast aside. "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live"—such words have a meaning too deep to be undone by any flippant theory-juggling.

(8) *The character of God.* We come now to a final argument for immortality—an argument more conclusive than all others if the premise on which it rests is sound. If there is a good God, and if this God has made man a creature of supreme worth and infinite potential capacities—if this God cares for human folks and is interested both in their earthly struggles and their ultimate destiny, immortality is assured. If there is not a good God able to create and conserve the human spirit, immortality is doubtful. But if there is

such a God, it is irrational to suppose that he lets his supreme creation perish.[17]

"Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove.

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why;
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just."

"Thou hast made him: thou art just." Were there no other argument for personal immortality, this transcendent fact would be argument enough.

We do not know whether the spirit of man is immortal. The case stands as with God's existence: the evidences in the affirmative are more logically cogent and practically satisfying than in the negative. The presumption is strong that immortality is true. However the outcome may prove itself, we may be confident with Plato's Socrates that "no evil can befall a good man, either in life or after death."

[17] Cf. Dean Charles R. Brown's Ingersoll lecture, *Living Again.*

CHAPTER XIII

CONCLUSION

A long time in our thinking we have been wandering in the mazes of the religious labyrinth. We have been trying to find, as we have come along the way, some answers to questions which are as old as religion itself, yet never more acute than they are today. Not always has the next step toward truth been obvious or easy, but we have pressed forward. And we have made some progress. The goals we have reached have not been far different from those our fathers reached. But we have reached them by different paths, paths outwardly more precarious, but inwardly more sure.

Let us look back and survey the journey. We saw that religion is the total attitude of life toward what is regarded as divine. Religious experience, often crowded out in these days by our mad hurry and obsession with material goods, is a controlling element in any well-rounded life, essential alike for happiness and for enrichment of personality. The roadway of faith, common to science and practical living as to religion, is a path not to be avoided but illumined by reason. The clear light of truth must shine upon it, and truth must be tested by a painstaking search for the most coherent and self-consistent view of things.

So fortified, we commenced the age-old quest for God. We saw some grounds for doubt, but none that need daunt us. God is not a superstitious delusion nor mere symbol of human desire. He is not hidden from us by the limits of our finite knowledge, nor banished by the findings of science, nor thrust out by the ugly, evil facts of life. We saw many sign-posts pointing us toward God. We live in a marvelous cosmos, and this cosmos with man, the supreme creation, cries out for a Creator. We live in a mind-like universe, a universe of long purposes, a universe that is sheer mystery without an Infinite Mind and an Infinite Purpose. The religious experience of humanity bears witness that it has seen God, and seeing has lived anew. The demands of reason for solid footing in man's most worthful ideals lead us to God as the ultimate ground and goal of values.

And what of the nature of this God? And what of ourselves? Is man an animal only, or physical organism only, or living soul? Our quest revealed man as personality, selfhood, spirit, and God as Infinite Person. Lest we assume too lightly this deep conviction of a personal God, we looked at rival views and found no adequate substitute in God as human idea, or God as more than person, or God as cosmic force, or God as totality-of-all.

Barriers emerge to thwart the religious spirit, foremost among them the problem of pain. Why does a good God let man suffer? Could he banish suffering if

he would? We found that this is not a Godless or an all-bad or an all-good world, but one that God and man may work together to improve. An all-powerful yet self-limited God has established for man's good a world of natural law and intertwining social relationships, which it is man's task to turn to good account. Confident in the goodness of a Providence that cares for each suffering human spirit, man may transcend what cannot yet be transformed.

Confronting the black, old problem of sin, we found it could not be dismissed by denying sin's existence. Neither society nor Satan can be the scape-goat to relieve us of responsibility. Man's will in some degree is free, and each is responsible for his own misdeeds. In fellowship with God man finds an aid to moral mastery, and through prayer he gets this power. Prayer is communion with an Infinite Spirit. Prayer is not self-hypnosis; prayer is valid in a world of law. We are justified in seeking through prayer for new glimpses of the Eternal, for moral self-transcendence, for needed material aids to higher living, for God's help to other human souls.

Facing our final problem, the whither of life, we found that neither biological nor social nor impersonal immortality gives a substitute for religion's hope that personality will endure. Personal immortality is a morally desirable, a scientifically tenable belief. Some arguments militate against it; none is insuperable. The reasonableness of the universe, man's unconquer-

able moral optimism, the intrinsic worth of the human spirit, the logical demand for the conservation of this life's values, the endless nature of man's moral task, the character of God—all point to life eternal.

. . . .

We have finished the journey we set out to make. But the end is not yet. The glory of the labyrinth is that there is always enough ahead to lend adventure to the quest for a way out. We can see blue sky above us if we will, we can be nourished and led along the way. We emerge at intervals into fair and pleasant places. There is joy in the journey, for "to travel hopefully is better than to arrive." There is perplexity in the journey; there need not be fear. But it is a never-ending journey—one that our children and our children's children through the centuries ahead have yet to travel. He who would say, "I have arrived," would thereby confess that he had not yet started.

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